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FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
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SECOND COMMITTEE
2nd meeting
held on
Friday, 2 October 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIRIZ BALLON (Uruguay)

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12 October 1992
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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that the Group of Asian States and the Group of African States had nominated Mr. Guerrero (Philippines) and Ms. Diop (Senegal) respectively for the posts of Vice-Chairman and that the Group of Western European and Other States had nominated Mr. Balzan (Malta) for the post of Rapporteur.

2. Mr. Guerrero (Philippines) and Ms. Diop (Senegal) were elected Vice-Chairmen and Mr. Balzan (Malta) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

3. The CHAIRMAN reported on the organizational arrangements for the consideration of agenda item 79. The General Assembly had decided that the item would be taken directly in plenary meeting, on the understanding that the Second Committee would adopt the relevant measures; following extensive consultations it had been agreed to establish an ad hoc working group chaired by Mr. Razali (Malaysia) to conduct informal consultations on the item.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/47/250, 251, 252; A/C.2/47/1, A/C.2/47/L.1 and Add.1)

4. After a brief exchange of courtesies the CHAIRMAN drew attention to a letter dated 18 September 1992 from the President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Second Committee (A/C.2/47/1) concerning the allocation of items to the Committee, and he referred also to documents A/C.2/47/L.1 and Add.1. In addition he drew the Committee's attention to several measures adopted by the General Assembly, on the basis of the recommendations contained in the first report of the General Committee concerning the organization of the forty-seventh regular session (A/47/250), with a view to enhancing the efficiency of and achieving economies in the legislative process.

5. Ms. KELLEY (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following changes had been made in the Committee's programme of work (A/C.2/47/L.1):

Monday 5 October:	"p.m." should read "a.m.".
Friday 9 October:	The Committee had been requested to defer its discussion of item 90 until additional information was received from the Chernobyl seminar to be held in Kiev in the first week of November in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/38.
Monday 12 October:	A note to the effect that items 84 and 78 would be taken together had been omitted.

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(Ms. Kelley)

Thursday 22 October: With regard to item 78 (Part V) the title of the report should be amended to read "Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on the work of its third special session".

Week of 23-27 November: The Committee would conclude its work on Friday 4 December.

6. Mr. JOMAA (Tunisia) said that his delegation supported the establishment of the ad hoc working group (which would not set a precedent) in view of the important work which the Committee was about to do in connection with the Rio Conference items. He asked whether the ad hoc group would meet before or after the debate in the plenary Assembly. Referring to paragraph 6 of document A/C.2/47/L.1 he asked whether interpretation facilities in the six official languages would be available for the work of the ad hoc group and the informal consultations, and how the work of the two working groups of the Vice-Chairmen and the work of the ad hoc group would be organized.

7. The CHAIRMAN, replying to the questions put by the representative of Tunisia, said that the ad hoc group was being established on a one-off basis as a result of the general interest in an item of such importance. It would meet shortly to determine which items to consider. In due course and in consultation with the President of the General Assembly the group's programme of work would be drawn up, and in consultation with delegations it would be ascertained whether it could begin its work during the general debate in the Assembly or whether it would be more convenient to wait until the week following 9 October.

8. Ms. KELLEY (Secretary of the Committee) said that everything possible would be done to make interpretation facilities available for the informal consultations.

9. Mr. MARTIN (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the countries members of the European Community, referred to the suggestion by the Secretary of the Committee that the debate on the Chernobyl disaster should be transferred from October to a date subsequent to the seminar on the topic to be held in Kiev at the beginning of November. Any postponement would cause serious difficulties for the States members of the European Community, which had important proposals to submit to the Committee on the item. The Twelve would like to bring those proposals forward at an early stage in the Committee's work. They understood of course that the Secretariat should wish to inform the Committee about the results of the seminar and they had no objection to that. However, Governments must be given an opportunity to state their views on the item. The Chairman had said how important it was for the Committee to complete its work on time; that did not seem possible unless it took up the Chernobyl item in the early stages of its work. The Community's proposals would be important ones, and he hoped that the Committee would approve them.

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(Mr. Martin, United Kingdom)

10. With regard to the arrangements for the debate on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), he endorsed the view of the representative of Tunisia that it would be very useful for the Chairman of the Committee to ask the President of the General Assembly whether the date for consideration of the item in plenary meeting could be decided quickly. Ministers from many countries wished to come for that debate and it was difficult for them to find time to do so; the later the date of the debate was announced, the more difficult it would be for high-level officials to attend.

11. Document A/C.2/47/L.1/Add.1 referred to two important documents: the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed Commission on Sustainable Development and the report of the Rio Conference itself.

12. He had been informed that volumes I to IV of the report of the Conference would be available at the beginning of October. Since it was already the beginning of October, it was to be hoped that delegations would have the report within the next few days. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General, neither the Secretariat department which was to produce it or the envisaged date of distribution were known.

13. However, it was absolutely essential for the report to be available for the negotiations on the Conference. It was to be hoped that the Chairman of the Committee would bring the urgency of the matter to the attention of the relevant Secretariat units.

14. Lastly and also with respect to item 79, he asked what the Secretariat's intention was. A discussion of organizational arrangements was planned, and there was a deadline for closure of the list of speakers. However, since the debate was to be held directly in plenary meeting, it was perhaps the only item for which a list of speakers was not needed. It would be of great help to the States members of the European Community if the Secretariat could indicate what the intentions were with regard to the discussion of the item.

15. The CHAIRMAN said that he would put the question of the date of the debate on the UNCED report to the President of the General Assembly.

16. Mr. STOBY (Director, Division of Economic and Social Council Affairs and Inter-agency Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Development) said that a working group of independent high-level advisers had been established with a view to submitting recommendations. The Secretary-General wished to have those recommendations to hand before completing his reports on UNCED. It was hoped that the reports would be available during the last week of October. On that basis it was envisaged that the General Assembly's debate on the Conference could begin during the week beginning 2 November.

17. Mr. GOUMENUY (Ukraine) said that he favoured consideration of item 90 at a later date. The Secretary-General was to provide a lengthy report concerning cooperation on Chernobyl in accordance with the related decision

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of the Economic and Social Council, and time would be needed both to prepare and to study that report. At the same time, his delegation shared the United Kingdom's concern that the Committee should complete its work on time. To postpone consideration of the item relating to Chernobyl would not have any negative consequences because such consideration would take place in November and the Committee would therefore be able to complete its work in early December as planned.

18. Page 27 of document L.1/Add.1 mentioned only two documents under the Chernobyl item; no mention was made of document A/47/132. That document, submitted by his country on 23 March 1992, contained an appeal from the leaders of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to the United Nations concerning provision of assistance in connection with Chernobyl. The document had been adopted in Kiev at a summit meeting between the leaders of those three countries. He requested that it be included among the documents to be considered by the Committee during the current session.

19. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Ukraine did not think it necessary to change the date for consideration of agenda item 90. However, the representative of the United Kingdom had proposed an alteration of the date planned for such consideration. He wondered whether it would strike the representative of Ukraine as inconvenient if consideration of the item were brought forward, provided that the necessary documentation was made available.

20. Mr. GOUMENUY (Ukraine) believed that the report of the Secretary-General on Chernobyl would be an important document and should be prepared in the proper manner in accordance with the decisions of the Economic and Social Council. If that document was ready on time, his delegation would have no objection to the date of the discussion being brought forward.

21. Ms. KELLEY (Secretary of the Committee) said that the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation for Chernobyl had contacted the Bureau and requested a change in the date planned for consideration of the item by the Committee in view of the fact that a meeting on Chernobyl would be held at Kiev in the first week of November.

22. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) said it was his understanding that the Secretariat, the Bureau and the Coordinator would consider the various proposals on the most appropriate date for consideration of the Chernobyl item. His delegation had taken note of the statement by the representative of the United Kingdom and looked forward with great interest to the important proposal to be made by the European Community. Nevertheless, he agreed with and endorsed the ideas expressed by Ukraine. Consideration of the item should be postponed in order that the relevant documentation could be prepared.

23. The documents which must be placed before the Committee in accordance with the decisions of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session would not be ready before 9 October. It

(Mr. Kudryavtsev, Russian Federation)

would not be a good idea to hold the discussion on Chernobyl without those documents. Secondly, it should be made clear that early November would see not a seminar on Chernobyl but a meeting of a special working group comprising representatives of those specialized agencies of the United Nations which were providing assistance at Chernobyl. In his opinion, it would not be right to consider the item without taking account of the opinions expressed by the specialized agencies at the Kiev meeting. Finally, his delegation would have no objection, given that the European Community countries wished to make their proposal known to the Committee at the earliest opportunity, if the representative of the United Kingdom were to introduce that proposal as soon as it was ready, even before consideration of the Chernobyl item. Meanwhile, he endorsed the proposal of Ukraine whereby the list of documents on the Chernobyl item should be extended to include the statement by the leaders of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

24. Mr. MARTIN (United Kingdom) said that consideration of agenda item 90 had been scheduled for Friday, 9 October, and there had been no prior announcement of any change in that schedule. His delegation was surprised by the sudden proposal to postpone such consideration. The courtesy of providing information on proposed changes would have made it possible to hold consultations for the purpose of reaching an agreement.

25. In the course of the discussions of the Economic and Social Council, the Under-Secretary-General had indicated in his report on the programme relating to Chernobyl, inter alia, that pledged contributions amounted only to $1 million, as opposed to the $600 million required for the programme. The European Community and its member States, which had been in contact with the Secretary-General and interested Governments, had considered possible ways of resolving the situation and prepared a declaration which they planned to make public during the general discussion. All delegations would thus have had the opportunity to express their opinions before the Kiev meeting, with a view to formulating a draft resolution in cooperation with the interested States. If that task was not begun before the Kiev meeting, it would not, in his delegation's opinion, be possible to reach an agreement on so complex an issue before the date mentioned, i.e. before 4 December. His delegation had been in contact with the delegations of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, which were aware of the United Kingdom's position on that issue. His delegation therefore opposed any postponement of the discussion of the item, which should be considered in October.

26. The CHAIRMAN proposed that informal consultations be held between the delegation of the United Kingdom, which acted also on behalf of the European Community, and the delegations of States with an interest in the item, and that the Bureau and secretariat of the Committee should be informed of the results of such consultations.

27. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) said he would be happy to engage in informal consultations on item 90 with all interested delegations.

28. Mr. MOJOUKHOV (Belarus), while supporting the proposal to hold informal consultations concerning a possible postponement of the discussion of item 90, reserved the right of his delegation to make comments of substance in connection with the Chernobyl issue.

29. Miss JANJUA (Pakistan), also speaking on behalf of the States members of the Group of 77, believed that item 84 and Part II of item 78 should not, given their complexity, be considered concurrently, as scheduled in the draft programme of work, and proposed that consideration of one of the two items be postponed until a later date. With regard to item 79, while welcoming the creation of the ad hoc working group, she believed that the group could begin its work only after its members had received the report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development because it could not base its discussions on the informal notes taken by each delegation.

30. Page 12 of document A/C.2/47/L.1 indicated that discussion of agenda item 12 would take place on 10 November but did not mention which chapters would be considered. She requested that the secretariat make it clear, if possible in writing, which chapters would in fact be under discussion.

31. Ms. KELLEY (Secretary of the Committee), replying to the representative of Pakistan, said that there had been no intention, in scheduling discussion of items 84 and 78 (Part II) for the same day, of detracting from the importance of either item. With regard to item 78, it was planned that the meeting on 12 October should include only the introduction of a very brief note from the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the President of the Economic and Social Council. The introduction of that note could, if preferred, be postponed until another meeting. Volumes I to IV of the report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would be issued on 9 October and the report of the Secretary-General at the end of October. Page 2 of document A/C.2/47/1 indicated which chapters of the report of the Economic and Social Council had been allocated to the Committee.

32. The CHAIRMAN said that he would take it that the Committee wished to consider items 84 and 78 (Part II) at separate meetings.

33. It was so decided.

34. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) noted that item 83 was due to be considered on Monday, 19 October, but that most of the relevant documents would be issued only one week prior to that date (between 12 and 13 October). His delegation, like others with a limited staff, found it difficult to study in detail the documents relating to the discussions of various bodies if such documents were not issued in sufficient time. He therefore asked that consideration of item 83 be postponed until at least two weeks after the date of issue of the documents.

35. Mr. MONTOYA (Colombia) said that his delegation shared the concerns expressed by the representatives of Tunisia and Pakistan in connection with the beginning of the work of the ad hoc group on item 79 and suggested that every possible effort be made to ensure that all documents were issued by 16 October rather than the end of October as announced.

36. Mr. BIAOU (Benin), endorsing the views expressed by the representatives of Pakistan and Colombia, said that his delegation was disturbed that the ad hoc working group would be inconvenienced by the delay in receiving the reports of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

37. Mr. YENEL (Turkey) said that he would refer to a subject which, although not arising until the end of the session, was undoubtedly of fundamental importance, namely, consideration of the draft biennial programme of work for the Second Committee, called for in General Assembly resolution 39/217, of 18 December 1984. The usual procedure was to consider the draft programme after the relevant draft resolutions had already been adopted. Experience showed, however, that every year, when the various draft resolutions were being considered - a process which frequently required the submission of supplementary reports or gave rise to requests for the inclusion of new items - delegations complained that documents were still not being distributed sufficiently in advance and, above all, that the Committee was not achieving the desired objective of reducing its workload and that agenda items continued to proliferate.

38. For those reasons, his delegation proposed that, for the current session, the draft biennial programme of work should be considered before the relevant draft resolutions were adopted. To that end, delegations would need a complete list of reports required under the various draft resolutions in order to be able to reduce their number and length. The Secretariat could prepare and distribute a reference list by mid-November. The work of the Secretariat, the Committee and delegations would thereby be rationalized and simplified.

39. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Turkey had put forward an interesting proposal which the Bureau would consider carefully.

40. Mr. JOMAA (Tunisia) observed that the concerns expressed by the representative of Pakistan, on behalf of the Group of 77, with regard to item 12 had not been satisfactorily explained.

41. The document on the organization of work of the Committee usually listed items and subitems. Delegations thus knew what issues were to be debated and had an opportunity from the outset of engaging in any appropriate formal or informal negotiations, or of resorting to other procedures. An attempt was now being made to cover a very important item in only two days; furthermore, delegations were expected to act without knowing for sure how to proceed. He would welcome a precise explanation as to which subitems would be considered and hoped that a revised version of document A/C.2/47/L.1 would be distributed, even an informal version.

(Mr. Jomaa, Tunisia)

42. It was impossible to hold a serious debate or carry out substantive work on the conclusions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development until the Secretary-General's report on UNEP was available. In order to enable delegations to ascertain the Secretary-General's views on the environment and development, including the availability of resources to set up a special fund or to resort to other means, it would also be useful in that case to have a document, distributed in advance and informally, containing views of the Secretary-General.

43. In any case, the Chairman of the ad hoc working group might well already begin holding informal consultations in order to ascertain which items should be considered and at what time. His delegation merely proposed that the group should seek views that might serve as a guide in the near future, so as to escape from the predicament in which the Committee found itself.

44. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretary had informed him that an informal document could be distributed, outlining the issues included under item 12. The Chairman of the ad hoc working group might wish to take note of the views and concerns expressed in the Committee in order to proceed in a manner consonant with the availability of documents.

45. Mr. PAULINICH (Peru), referring to the views expressed by the representative of Turkey, said that the limitation on the number of resolutions could be considered only in terms of the importance of the agenda items, as would be noted in particular during the consideration of item 46. In that regard, the Group of 77 submitted more draft resolutions, depending on the importance of each item.

46. Mr. YENEL (Turkey) explained that he had proposed a reduction not in the number of draft resolutions - which also would be extremely useful - but in the number of items and of reports requested by the Committee.

47. Ms. KELLEY (Secretary of the Committee), replying to the representatives of Pakistan and Morocco, suggested that consideration of item 78 (Part II) should be postponed from 12 to 14 October and item 83 from 19 to 26 October, so that four meetings could be held on the item during that week.

48. Miss JANJUA (Pakistan) pointed out that postponement of item 83 might well interfere with the informal consultations, since that process was very tiring. If the report could not be distributed before 12 October, the Committee would have to accept the Secretary's suggestion.

49. The CHAIRMAN said that, since the documents could not be distributed earlier, it would be appropriate to accept the suggested new dates, allowing one more week in which to study the documents.

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50. Ms. FREUDENSCHUSS (Austria) said that, in deferring item 83 from 19 until 26 October, it would be logical to move the informal consultations from the week beginning 26 October to the week beginning 19 October.

51. Mr. MARTIN (United Kingdom) suggested that, in order to facilitate the Committee's work, the informal consultations should be held on 19, 20 and 21 October.

52. Miss JANJUA (Pakistan) suggested that the debate on item 83, instead of being held in the afternoon of 26 October, should be held in the morning of that day.

53. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee approved the programme of work in document A/C.2/47/L.1, as orally revised and in accordance with the proposals put forward.

54. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
3rd meeting
held on
Monday, 5 October 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

STATEMENT BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

GENERAL DEBATE

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14 October 1992
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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The CHAIRMAN said that, after consultations with members of the Bureau, a division of responsibilities between the two Vice-Chairmen had been agreed upon regarding informal consultation on the draft proposals submitted under the various items of the agenda allocated to the Committee.

STATEMENT BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

2. Mr. JI Chaozhu (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Development) said that the revitalization of the Organization in the area of peace-keeping and conflict resolution should also be extended, as stipulated in Article 55 of the Charter, to promoting higher standards of living, full employment and solutions of international economic and social problems. The simultaneous pursuit of both peace and development remained the task of the United Nations. In that regard, the Second Committee had a moral responsibility to confront more boldly the dire situation of the world economy; unless members fully grasped the fundamental dangers inherent in the economy and addressed the problem in depth, there could be an economic calamity of major proportions. The Organization could not do everything by itself, however, and only the recognition on the part of Member States of the seriousness of the problems confronting the world economy, and a political will to seek a collective basis for addressing them could produce positive results. The world economy was now more fully integrated than ever before, and it was not a zero sum game.

3. In 1992, world output had been growing at an annual rate of less than 1 per cent, and world output per capita was expected to decline for the second year in a row. There were no grounds for complacency. The international community seemed somehow to have lost touch with the seriousness of the problems of growing poverty throughout much of the world, mass starvation and famine, economic stagnation in the midst of growing population, growing protectionism, massive debt, a gradual erosion of the trading system encouraged by the impasse in the Uruguay Round, growing political instability in many countries, ethnic violence, rising tides of economic refugees, the continuing deterioration of the economies of the former Soviet Union despite the assistance measures taken, and dangerous distortions in the economies of a number of large industrial countries. To those problems must be added the absence of meaningful policy coordination, which was essential to any hope of reaching progress in addressing those issues.

4. Rates of growth were highly disparate. The stagnation was attributed to the recession or weak recovery in the industrial economies and to the unprecedented decline of the economies in transition, where output had dropped by some 30 per cent over the last two years. The difficulties of transition had proven far greater than thought earlier. In addition, the economies of the new entities that had once constituted Yugoslavia had virtually collapsed. Growth in the developing countries as a whole had been around

(Mr. Ji Chaozhu)

4.8 per cent in 1992, but that improvement was unevenly distributed, as it was mainly due to an acceleration of growth in China and recovery in West Asia from the shock of the Gulf War. South and East Asia had continued to grow vigorously, while Latin America and the Caribbean had shown some recovery in 1991 and 1992. On the other hand, conditions had deteriorated further in Africa, partly as a result of the severe drought that had affected a large part of the continent. The continuing robustness of a number of economies in South and East Asia was one bright spot. Those countries were increasing their imports and thus were, in a small but significant way, supporting growth in other countries. The modest recovery in Latin America was encouraging, but there was reason to fear that the improvement might prove to be transitory. With regard to the external debt, there had been some progress in reaching agreements to restructure the bank debt of several heavily indebted countries, in a manner that recognized the economic, social and political limits to their servicing capacity.

5. The agenda for urgent multilateral action could hardly be more crowded than it currently was. The need to solve ethnic and political strife that divided nations and constrained economic growth in certain countries, to end prolonged recession or stagnation in the industrial economies, to halt the decline of output and standard of living in the economies in transition, to alleviate the effects of drought and famine affecting millions throughout the world, to achieve sustained growth in Africa, and to finally solve the massive debt problem of the developing countries were among the major items on that agenda. Consequently, the Second Committee must give serious consideration to how it could organize itself to begin a high-level dialogue among all Member States with a view to addressing those fundamental issues. There was no universal political forum more suited to the task than the Second Committee.

6. Improvement in policy coordination among the major industrial countries was essential for the restoration of confidence. The difficulties experienced in the European monetary system in September 1992 showed the necessity for such coordination. It was clear, however, that successful policy coordination required an equitable sharing of the burden of adjustment. That was certainly the case in the area of exchange rates; similarly, countries with persistent trade surpluses should share the responsibility to adjust with countries which ran persistent trade deficits. The need for sharing of responsibilities was not limited to the industrial countries. It extended to the interrelationship between those countries and the developing countries. Many developing countries had undertaken major reforms in economic policy in recent years, often at great human cost, at least in the short term. However, commensurate action on the part of the industrial countries had been lacking. National policies had been inadequate to activate growth in those countries. Most of them had placed too heavy a burden on monetary policy to achieve growth. With a great deal of unutilized capacity in most countries and the pressing need for improvement in both physical infrastructure and human resources, a reorientation of fiscal policy towards demand stimulation and investment appeared essential for sustained improvement in growth. A credible medium-term programme of fiscal consolidation was still critical for the

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restoration of confidence. A programme of increased investment, financed by a one-shot increase in fiscal deficit or reordering of expenditure, would generate income and savings and would not necessarily conflict with the objective of fiscal consolidation in the medium term.

7. The international atmosphere for investment and growth could be improved by the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations, which remained stalled on the question of agricultural subsidies. The negotiations were now almost two years behind schedule. The impasse had created uncertainties over the future of the multilateral trading system and had tended to discourage efficient patterns of investment and growth. The positions of the European Community and the United States could be reconciled only through interventions by political leadership at the highest levels.

8. On a slightly optimistic note, aggregate flows of resources to the developing countries had taken a turn for the better. However, they were still well below requirements, and much of the recent flow consisted of short-term private capital. Many countries were still in need of a substantial increase in official finance, especially on concessional terms. The economies in transition required an infusion of considerable external resources. It was therefore essential to give immediate effect to the ninth IMF quota increase, ensure an adequate tenth replenishment of the International Development Association and complete arrangements for a substantial capital increase of the Asian Development Bank. Bilateral concessional assistance still played a large part in the development of the poorer developing countries and needed to be enhanced to support their efforts to increase investments and diversify economies.

9. The end of the cold war had raised great hopes for a quick and substantial reduction of military expenditure. Some reduction in such expenditure had indeed taken place, and there was reason for guarded optimism about greater reduction. Yet economic slow-down had led some countries with major military establishments to protect jobs in defence industries. Conversion became a burden when growth was sluggish and jobs were scarce. The reinvigoration of economic growth was essential if the peace dividend was to be reaped.

10. Member States had an obligation to follow through with the agreements reached at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and in particular to translate into concrete action the provisions of Agenda 21. In that regard significant additional resources were required to carry out environmentally-sound development programmes, particularly in the developing countries, in order to ensure that the momentum achieved at the Rio Conference was not rapidly lost. The decisions taken by Member States at the current session relating to the new Commission on Sustainable Development would critically affect the future work of the Organization in respect of environment and development. Looking to the future, it was clear that development must be economically, socially and environmentally viable and sustainable. No one aspect of development, however, could be treated in

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isolation, and it should be borne in mind that no major progress in the environmental aspects of development could be achieved unless a solution was found to the fundamental issues of population growth, economic stagnation, poverty alleviation, employment, human resources development, and national capacity-building. That linkage was an important factor in the decisions Member States would be taking at the current session regarding the scope and functioning of the new Commission on Sustainable Development in the context of the revitalized Economic and Social Council.

11. In view of the seriousness of the world economic situation, it was essential that political leaders recognize the need to develop collective policies with agreed "rules of the game" for the world economy to expand in the interests of all States and all peoples through productive investment and increased trade. In that connection, the United Nations could play an important role by carrying out a collective and objective review of the world economy, by identifying and analysing the potential implications of policy options available to Member States and, through the appropriate machinery of the revitalized Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, by reaching decisions on broad objectives and general guidelines for Member States, international financing and development funding organizations and regional organizations. Together with the Department of Economic and Social Development, the Bretton Woods institutions and GATT should participate in the deliberations of the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee in order to facilitate decision-making. Such close cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions would become increasingly important in the future. It was also essential to strengthen and harmonize the efforts of the entire United Nations system in order to assist the Governments of Member States in elaborating the frameworks for their economic policy.

12. It was also incumbent upon the Member States and the Secretariat of the United Nations to ensure that the Fourth United Nations Development Decade was translated into concrete and tangible economic and social advancement for all the developing countries. It was for that purpose that the Secretary-General had consolidated all the entities working in the economic and social sectors in New York within the Department of Economic and Social Development. The Department was fully implementing the mandate entrusted to it by Governments in all areas, including those relating to transnational corporations and their important role in direct private investment, technology transfer and trade, and in the application of science and technology to development. More generally, the Secretary-General had stressed the need for a closer link between economic and social development and peace-building and preventive diplomacy. With the frightening growth of crises emerging around the world, there was a need for a more systematic approach for early warning of economic and social crisis situations in order to assist the Secretary-General, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council in taking the necessary decisions. The Department could make an important contribution, in cooperation with others, through the collection and analysis of data.

(Mr. Ji Chaozhu)

13. With regard to operational activities for development, it would be important for Member States to keep in mind the fundamental and objective role of the United Nations as a provider of grant technical assistance to developing countries in support of their national development programmes. One of the objectives of the Decade was to strengthen international development cooperation. In that regard, the importance of stable and predictable growth in flows of resources could not be overemphasized.

14. It was time for Member States to come face to face with the severe and devastating situation, both economic and social, in much of Africa. It should be asked why the international community seemed to have such difficulty in recognizing the larger implications of the horrible tragedy in that continent, which took the form of social disintegration, violence, the influx of refugees, famine and human suffering on an unprecedented scale. It was not enough merely to have a new programme of action for Africa. All Member States must commit themselves fully to helping the countries of the region in the short term, while laying the groundwork for longer-term growth. The Department was currently consulting with a number of Governments on a series of initiatives to mobilize the resources of the entire United Nations system and bilateral programmes to build a basis for urgent action; mention should also be made of various new initiatives being taken by the Bretton Woods institutions.

15. The role of the United Nations in world economic and political affairs had never been more crucial. The decisions that would be taken by the Committee and the General Assembly would determine the degree to which the Organization would be able to fulfil the role expected of it in a period of unprecedented transition, crises and hope. For its part, the Department stood ready to lend its full support to the Second Committee.

GENERAL DEBATE

16. Mr. ZAMAN (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the world economy had expanded significantly during the cold war, largely to the benefit of the developed countries. Furthermore, the current recession and the uncertain prospects for the growth of international trade were undermining the efforts to achieve stabilization and economic reform in the developing countries, which, due to the globalization of the economy, were increasingly affected by international economic instability. In confronting that situation, adjustment must become more universal. The stringent structural adjustment programmes accepted by the developing countries must be complemented by structural changes at the world level. If the efforts of the developing countries were not to fail, the industrialized countries must endeavour to eliminate structural rigidities, to reduce long-term interest rates through fiscal consolidation and to coordinate economic policies with a view to promoting international growth. The recent crisis in the financial and currency markets in Europe showed the crucial importance of global policy

(Mr. Zaman, Pakistan)

coordination. The tightening of fiscal policy in some countries must be counterbalanced by a policy of expansion on the part of surplus countries, and any coordinated programme of recovery must include an increased inflow of resources to the developing countries. Accordingly, the Group of 77 was suggesting that, as part of its work, the Committee should organize a meeting of representatives of the international financial institutions, OECD and the seven major industrialized countries (the Group of Seven) to assess the recent financial crisis and the steps being taken to arrest its adverse consequences for the world economy. The Committee could thus act as a forum for a discussion on current issues.

17. The developed countries must demonstrate the political will to ensure that the Uruguay Round negotiations reached an early and balanced conclusion. The developing countries were constantly being urged to comply with the rules of the market economy, but their exports were obstructed by the tariff and trade barriers created by the same countries that were urging market economies upon them. Thus, the developing countries were insisting that the principles of the market economy should also be respected in international trade. Access to the markets of the developed countries was indispensable for an expansion in world trade, which was the most important vehicle for growth and development. Urgent measures needed to be taken in conformity with the Integrated Programme for Commodities, taking into account the general decline in commodity prices in 1991, and the developing countries which were dependent on those commodities must be assisted in diversifying their economies.

18. Despite the recent fiscal crisis, the Trade and Development Board maintained that there was no shortage of savings. The developing countries therefore hoped for an international agreement to enhance financial flows for development. An international campaign, such as the one undertaken for assistance to the former Soviet Union, was required. The ODA target of 0.7 per cent must be achieved, and grant assistance especially for social programmes must be expanded; the debt burden must be alleviated, particularly for countries that had serviced their debts scrupulously at considerable cost to their population, and measures must be taken to encourage greater global investment in the developing countries.

19. With regard to the reform of the Economic and Social Council, the Group of 77 held that international development cooperation must be treated as a whole at the macroeconomic level, rather than be the subject of fragmented reviews.

20. On the question of follow-up to the Rio Conference, it was essential for the developed countries to respect the financial commitments they had made by indicating, when post-conference mechanisms were considered, the time-frame in which resources for the implementation of Agenda 21 would be made available. It was important to note in that connection that the concept of sustainable development was based on the principle of equity, not only between generations, but also among nations.

(Mr. Zaman, Pakistan)

21. With regard to the triennial policy review of operational activities for development, the United Nations had a unique role to play in mobilizing technical expertise to help developing countries that sought assistance in managing their development. It was important that the United Nations should immediately implement the structural changes specified by the General Assembly in resolution 44/211 as part of an integrated package especially in the context of the ongoing reorganization of the economic and social sectors. The developing countries hoped that an exhaustive debate on operational activities would take place with a view to ensuring the most cost-effective and efficient use of resources and the coordinated implementation of programmes that accorded with their own priorities.

22. Sir David HANNAY (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said it was gratifying that confrontation was being replaced by cooperation at the international level, as demonstrated by the successful outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

23. There had been some signs of revival in the economies of developing countries in the first half of 1992 and, according to forecasts by the International Monetary Fund, that trend should continue in 1993. Those positive results were due in part to structural reforms and prudent macroeconomic policies. In the industrial countries, however, the outlook was still uncertain, and the recent turbulence in currency markets, which underlined the need for strengthened cooperation in order to achieve non-inflationary sustainable growth, was a particular source of concern.

24. A global consensus was evolving on the need to establish democratic, pluralistic societies which respected human rights and supported private enterprise. Human development and poverty alleviation were vital components of that process. They could be achieved only through good governance, which would help to ensure that developed countries maintained support for the necessary international development cooperation, including adequate aid flows. However, a supportive economic environment at both the national and international levels was also needed, with a free and open multilateral trading system accompanied by appropriate debt relief measures.

25. In spite of some encouraging developments, many problems remained - poverty, AIDS, unsustainable population growth, inadequate basic education and health care, environmental degradation, civil strife and natural disasters - which posed major challenges to the United Nations. As the Secretary-General had noted in his excellent report on the work of the Organization, United Nations structures had to be adapted to meet the new challenges.

26. Among the items on the Committee's agenda were three to which the European Community and its member States attached particular importance: the follow-up to the Rio Conference, the relationship between the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, and the reform of the United Nations development system.

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(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

27. In the area of environment and development, the modalities of the Commission on Sustainable Development must be determined as soon as possible. In order to be truly effective, the Commission needed a highly qualified and competent support structure within the Secretariat that would act as a focal point for inter-agency coordination. It also needed to find innovative approaches which would ensure the full participation of non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, such as the European Community. It should not waste time on sterile and repetitive debates such as had taken place in subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council. In that respect, it would be useful for the Commission to adopt the Council's segment-based approach.

28. The European Community and its member States welcomed the adoption of the forest principles at the Earth Summit and were already preparing plans for their implementation. They considered that it was particularly important to conclude work on a convention to combat desertification by June 1994 and believed that negotations should be based on the programme areas set out in Agenda 21 and the work done in the United Nations system since the United Nations Conference on Desertification in 1977. It was for the General Assembly to establish a framework for the negotations, which should be conducted along lines similar to the negotiations for the Convention on Climate Change.

29. The decisions and principles adopted at the Rio Conference could not be put into effect unless countries honoured the financial commitments they had made. The European Community had already allocated 3 billion ECUs for the funding of specific projects and programmes in key sectors of Agenda 21, giving priority to poverty reduction, technology transfers and institutional capacity-building. To implement those activities it would draw on the expertise and experience of non-governmental organizations.

30. The European Community had also undertaken to contribute to the Global Environment Facility which, once restructured, should become the permanent financial mechanism for all activities pertaining to existing and future global environmental conventions. It recognized the need to provide adequate financial resources to the International Development Association (IDA) and would continue to give consideration to an increment for environmental purposes.

31. Recent changes in the world political situation had created an opportunity for the United Nations to play its full role under the Charter. The Organization's effectiveness in the economic and social fields must therefore be improved. That could be achieved by a careful review of the specific characteristics of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and continuing with the reforms begun under General Assembly resolution 45/264. The Council's agenda must also be given a fresh look, as it was not addressed in that resolution. It was essential to avoid duplication of work and ensure that the Council's attention was focused on coordination and the provision of policy guidance on development issues. The

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

Council must continue to perform certain statutory functions under the Charter, but those need not of themselves generate lengthy debate.

32. A new look should also be taken at operational activities for development, which had evolved in a fragmented way over the years and thus did not always respond to the needs of developing countries, particularly the least developed. The individual bodies of the system should therefore act more efficiently and Member States should pay greater attention to their operation. The States members of the European Community believed that a package of reforms was required so that, having demonstrated its efficiency, the system could receive the resources it needed for development activities. Essentially, such reforms should improve programme execution with a view to promoting human development and poverty alleviation. On the latter point, the Community could only welcome the growing convergence between the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions. At the headquarters level, agreement should be reached on a common set of priorities for the system as a whole; at the field level, a common strategy should be established for each country, based on capacity-building that would promote national execution of projects and programmes.

33. In the years to come, the Organization would face numerous challenges. The institutional reforms undertaken as well as future reforms would improve its capacity to respond to those challenges, but only if practical steps were taken to fight poverty and environmental deterioration.

34. Mr. LAOURI (Algeria) said that the major changes which had occurred in international political relations in recent years had failed to produce comparable policy changes in the area of economic and social development, as had been hoped. While the developed countries continued to experience consistently high economic growth rates, the developing countries were currently experiencing the longest period of economic recession - if not regression - they had known since acquiring political independence. As a result, the old East-West contradictions were likely to be replaced by a new type of confrontation between North and South, which would pose a serious threat to peace. The crushing external debt burden, difficulties of access to developed country markets, rising interest rates, worsening terms of trade and reduced capital and investment flows continued to undermine all development efforts. There was also a real risk that the international community would lose interest in the countries of the South and turn its attention instead to Central and Eastern Europe, despite the assurances given in that regard at the high-level session of the Economic and Social Council in July 1991. In that unfavourable context, the introduction by various developing countries of bold economic reforms and the implementation, often at a very high social cost which threatened internal stability, of rigorous structural adjustment programmes had little real chance of success without a rapid improvement in the international economic environment or a revival of international cooperation. That was particularly true of Africa, where, despite the efforts being made, the situation was extremely disturbing. Efforts to boost economic growth in Africa had yielded no significant results, largely because of the

(Mr. Laouri, Algeria)

failure of the international community to honour commitments it had in fact freely undertaken.

35. The following actions thus seemed to be imperative: the necessary steps must be taken to bring a swift end to the prolonged recession in the industrialized world; the establishment of an open, transparent, regulated and non-discriminatory international trading system must be promoted through the conclusion of the Uruguay negotiations; specific arrangements for re-evaluating commodity prices must be devised; and durable solutions to the external debt problem must be identified. Yet any international development effort or strategy would be ineffective and illusory if it did not rest on a firm financial base commensurate with the goals to be attained. In that context, his delegation supported an international conference on the financing of development.

36. The Rio Conference had amply demonstrated that environmental protection and preservation depended above all on the promotion of sustained development and growth. The developed countries should therefore honour their commitments and discharge their historical responsibilities by mobilizing considerable additional resources and facilitating the transfer of environmentally sound technologies on preferential and non-commercial terms. The Commission on Sustainable Development should be promptly established in order to implement the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. Moreover, the measures and legal instruments adopted at Rio would be incomplete if a convention on desertification, particularly in Africa, was not drawn up soon.

37. The ongoing restructuring of the economic and social sectors was particularly important. General Assembly resolution 45/264 set out the principles and guidelines that should govern that restructuring, an effort which all States should support. The United Nations must be made more efficient, more democratic and, finally, more capable of effectively assuming its role of promoting equitable economic and social development. The restructuring of the Secretariat and the economic and social sectors of the Organization, the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council and the revival of operational activities for development could enhance the credibility and effectiveness of multilateral action and facilitate the development of a collective will.

38. Those efforts should not mask the need to expand cooperation between the countries of the South. Those countries should benefit from their complementary natures, mobilize their potential and forge ties based on mutual benefit and solidarity, for example, in the area of regional and subregional economic integration agreements. In that spirit, Algeria warmly welcomed the establishment of a North African group that would be able to put its size, homogeneity and resources to its advantage in overcoming the multiple challenges facing individual countries, particularly the challenge of development. His country sought to facilitate the development and promotion of African cooperation within the framework of the treaty on the African Economic Community signed at Abuja in June 1991. However, such regional and

(Mr. Laouri, Algeria)

subregional integration efforts could only complement international economic relations and should be vigorously supported by the entire international community.

39. Algeria had undertaken a programme of wide-ranging economic reforms, which was difficult but necessary, and which went far beyond mere adjustment in response to a crisis. Several innovative legal instruments had already been adopted which held promise for the promotion of exports, competitiveness, private investment and price and trade liberalization. Despite an unfavourable economic climate, Algeria sought to broaden and improve on that experience and it counted on the cooperation of its partners in that effort.

40. Mr. SERSALE di CERISANO (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the globalization of markets and the resulting intense competition reaffirmed the concept of interdependence. International cooperation had become indispensable to economic growth, development and the elimination of external factors which undermined growth in general and that of the developing countries in particular. The new perception of that phenomenon had resulted in the adoption of a series of documents, including the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, the Cartagena Commitment, concluded at the eighth session of UNCTAD, and the agreements concluded in the context of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

41. Development issues could be approached only by undertaking a global structural analysis. The Rio Group was convinced that the United Nations and, a fortiori, the Second Committee constituted the ideal forum in which to debate those questions. In carrying out its reponsibilities in the peace-keeping field, the Organization must not overlook the problems relating to poverty alleviation, economic growth and the strengthening of international multilateral cooperation. Economic and social development must be the major concern of genuine preventive diplomacy. Accordingly, development issues should be viewed with the same sense of urgency as questions relating to international security. In addition, full advantage should be taken of the Organization's coordinating and intersectoral capabilities. There was a need for a coherent policy through which the Economic and Social Council could play the central role envisaged for it in the Charter. Lastly, policy objectives should be supported by the operational activities of the United Nations system.

42. The Rio Group attached central importance to the coordination of macroeconomic policies and the recovery of economic growth. While the developing countries had liberalized and restructured their economies at a considerable cost in terms of human suffering, the industrialized countries had continued to post high fiscal deficits, to subsidize their inefficient sectors and to maintain tariff and non-tariff barriers which curtailed the flow of exports from the developing countries. Such imbalances endangered the viability of the efforts made by those countries and threatened their political, economic and social stability. The recovery of economic growth and

(Mr. Sersale di Cerisano, Argentina)

development required both the adoption of appropriate national policies and a suitable international economic environment which, despite the optimism of some, did not currently exist.

43. With regard to international trade, while the countries of the Rio Group were facilitating access to their markets and promoting a liberalized trading system, the developed countries seemed to be able to agree only on statements of intentions. More than ever before, however, concrete actions were essential. In view of the negative impact of protectionism, the Rio Group appealed to the industrialized countries to demonstrate the political will required for the completion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. The conclusion of the Uruguay Round would create new opportunities for world trade and would allow all countries to reallocate their resources, thus reactivating the world economy.

44. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Earth Summit) had reflected the understanding that the protection of the environment and the preservation of natural resources were not incompatible with economic development but were, on the contrary, complementary to it. It would, however, be necessary to reconsider the approach taken to international cooperation in order to ensure that respect for the global environment did not adversely affect economic and social justice. As a follow-up to the commitments entered into at the Rio Conference, the Commission on Sustainable Development should be established as soon as possible, so that it could monitor the implementation of the programmes and activities envisaged as part of Agenda 21.

45. The Group of 77 had initiated the current restructuring of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, a process which must be deepened at the current session through the definition of the respective spheres of competence of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The streamlining of the Council's agenda was provided for in General Assembly resolution 45/264 and the Group of 77 would make further proposals in that regard. The process should be guided by the Assembly resolutions already adopted and by the concern with streamlining the functioning of the Council so as to enable it to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter.

46. Likewise, the triennial review of operational activities for development, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 44/211, should be carried out in a coherent manner and should be integrated with the process of restructuring of the economic and social fields. The negotiations in both areas must be carefully coordinated.

47. Mr. McKINNON (New Zealand) said that the economic and social prospects of all States Members of the United Nations were linked to the outcome of the Uruguay Round. A solution depended fundamentally on the ability of the two major economic Powers, namely, the United States of America and the European Community, to reach an agreement. The choice was clear: either to maintain the system of international trade rules painstakingly developed over the past

(Mr. McKinnon, New Zealand)

50 years, and to eliminate gradually restrictive practices and export subsidies, or to do nothing and to face an escalation of disputes that would undermine the very foundations of the system, sowing the seeds of distrust and leading to the renewed polarization of world politics.

48. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had reflected the recognition that the problems of environment and development could be addressed only on a global basis. Agenda 21 covered virtually every aspect of the work of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. The institutional chapters of Agenda 21 outlined a framework for reorienting the activities of international institutions and thereby promoting the achievement of sustainable development objectives.

49. With regard to institutional arrangements, the General Assembly must, at the current session, decide on the structure and functioning of the Commission on Sustainable Development; that body must be a dynamic institution which would enable Governments working through the United Nations system to adopt an integrated approach to development and environment activities. The Commission would have a key role to play in advancing the process begun at the Rio Conference and must be broadly representative in order to fulfil its mandate properly.

50. Chapter 38 of Agenda 21 provided the overall basis for action. It delineated the respective responsibilities of the organizations of the United Nations system and described the reforms to be undertaken.

51. With regard to sectoral issues, the Assembly must establish a framework for the drafting of a convention to combat desertification. While the plague of desertification did not affect all countries directly, it must be eliminated if global sustainable development was to be achieved. In the Pacific region, the related issue of freshwater was a key concern in that overall context.

52. Since 1989, substantial progress had been made in eliminating the destructive practice of large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing. The General Assembly resolutions on that subject must be fully implemented. Moreover, the over-exploitation of resources on the high seas could have a devastating impact on resources within exclusive economic zones, which were of crucial importance to the economic development of coastal and island States. Accordingly, New Zealand welcomed the decision taken at the Earth Summit to convene a conference to deal with such problems.

53. New Zealand welcomed the recognition in Agenda 21 of the special problems faced by developing island States. The first global conference on the sustainable development of such countries would identify the strategies which could enable them to develop on a sustainable basis.

54. The two major outcomes of the Rio Conference were the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, both

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(Mr. McKinnon, New Zealand)

of which New Zealand had signed at Rio. Both agreements offered a good basis for moving forward, and the General Assembly would at its current session identify areas where further work was needed. New Zealand would continue to play an active role in negotiations to strengthen international measures against ozone depletion.

55. The Conference had placed environment and development at the forefront of the international agenda. Steps must now be taken to help meet the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.

56. The Second Committee was also charged with the task of looking at the issue of reform of the economic and social machinery of the United Nations, which was essential to the achievement of Agenda 21 objectives. Its task, broadly expressed, was to ensure an appropriate allocation of responsibilities across the United Nations system and to enhance the Organization's effectiveness in the field of economic and social development. In that context, there was a need to set clear goals and to examine practically how they would best be attained.

57. With respect to operational activities, all countries were confronting more and more demands on their resources, to address, for instance, environmental, economic and development issues. They continually needed to finance new activities with more and more limited resources. The United Nations system must help them to confront those demands and must continue, at the operational level, its activities on behalf of developing countries especially. The United Nations must show that it could provide targeted assistance at reasonable cost and, more generally, that it supported the political and development goals of all its members. Its development-related operational activities were measuring up well, although new challenges would continue to test its collective resolve. In recent months, for example, there had been lively debate on the question of conditionality of aid; that was an area where New Zealand believed that a flexible and cooperative approach was required. The goal was the translation into reality of the idea of equitable and sustainable development. It was important to remember that the basic strengths of the United Nations in the economic and social field lay in its neutrality, impartiality and cultural sensitivity.

58. The current year's triennial review was an opportunity to assess whether the policies and strategies put in place three years before remained valid and whether they were delivering benefits to the poor in developing countries. It also provided the means to integrate UNCED recommendations into the operational activities of the United Nations.

59. The previous triennial study had provided a solid framework on which to build further reform efforts. General Assembly resolution 44/211 had stood the test of time and remained valid. However, the current year's review must identify further measures to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the operational system.

(Mr. McKinnon, New Zealand)

60. The review process should concentrate on programming, utilization of national capacities, decentralization and the strengthening of the resident coordinator system. Specifically, the United Nations should adopt at the operational field level rigorous and soundly based management methods offering greater transparency and accountability. The governance of operational activities could be greatly enhanced if the Economic and Social Council were to assume the functions of an international development council. However, New Zealand did have genuine reservations as to whether smaller executive bodies could achieve the objective of enhanced managerial effectiveness. An increasing diversity of interests must be represented on governing bodies if they were to achieve their objectives.

61. The Second Committee must adopt a coordinated, system-wide approach to issues of environment and development at the international and national levels. The implementation of Agenda 21 would require perseverance, cooperation and vision.

62. Mr. PIBULSSONGRAM (Thailand) said that the realities of economics and development demanded a new vision for global cooperation, an outward-looking one based on a genuine commitment to global partnership. Economic policies that served only short-term interests must be rejected as they could not produce sustainable growth for future generations or contribute to peace, security and prosperity. Accordingly, nations must revise their development concepts and refashion their national policies to attain the goals of sustainable global development, a fair and free global trading system, enhanced regional cooperation and a strengthened United Nations.

63. That new vision of global cooperation required also that the four forms of indivisibility be taken into account: between peace and prosperity, political and economic security, democracy and development, and environmental protection and sustainable development. The consensus achieved by participants at the eighth session of UNCTAD in Cartagena and the Rio Conference was encouraging.

64. Thailand, demonstrating its commitment to Agenda 21, had already taken concrete action, notably in the legal and administrative fields, to implement the principles on forestry, the Rio Declaration, and the Convention on Biological Diversity. At the international level, there was a need to enhance multilateral cooperation to achieve sustainable development, where the role of the United Nations was crucial and indispensable. The implementation of Agenda 21 must span the work programmes of the various United Nations agencies in the development field. The past sectoral approach to development must come to an end, and United Nations development activities must proceed in a comprehensive multidisciplinary manner.

65. To strengthen the United Nations institutional arrangement in that regard, his delegation supported the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development as the coordinating and monitoring organ for the implementation of Agenda 21. Sustainable development would only become

(Mr. Pibulssongram, Thailand)

reality if the international economic environment was favourable. It was imperative, therefore, for all nations to establish comprehensive, clear and effective rules of international trade. In that context the completion of the Uruguay Round would lay a solid foundation for healthy, balanced and constructive international trading relations. Thailand attached great importance to the success of those negotiations and strongly urged the parties to intensify their efforts to reach an agreement rapidly. The success of the Round would greatly assist developing countries' ongoing efforts to liberalize their economies; it was to be hoped that, in that connection, rules and principles would be established for fairer multilateral trading relations so that the tendency to employ unilateral protectionist measures in addressing trade disputes could be averted.

66. The principle of trade liberalization should also be the foundation of all regional cooperation policies. Such cooperation was a lengthy process in which Thailand had been actively involved in South-East Asia and the Asia-Pacific region. In Indo-China, strengthening economic and technical links had assumed top priority in Thailand's efforts to forge an equal partnership with Laos, Viet Nam and Cambodia. Thailand also stood ready to cooperate with efforts to restore peace and prosperity to Indo-China. Within ASEAN, Thailand and its partners had taken the initiative of creating a free-trade area that should lead to a greater influx of trade and investment into the entire region. Moreover, Thailand was attempting to strengthen cooperation among countries of the Asia-Pacific region.

67. Global cooperation could be better served through regional partnership. Interregional cooperation should therefore be promoted as the next step towards greater international cooperation, helping to prevent the emergence of exclusionary regional economic and trading blocs. It was hoped that other regional groupings would develop similar outward-looking approaches. In that regard, the Government of Thailand urged that possible association between the ASEAN Free Trade Area and the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) within the framework of Asia-Pacific economic cooperation should be explored.

68. At the multilateral level, the United Nations should take the leadership role in the promotion of international economic and development cooperation. The indivisibility of political and economic security was self-evident. Therefore, the United Nations should carry out its activities in the development field with the same sense of mission, dedication and urgency as it did in the political and security fields. His delegation supported General Assembly resolutions 45/264 and 46/235 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, as well as recent initiatives on that matter which had been put forth by the Group of 77 and ASEAN.

69. It was imperative that the restructuring should contribute to the fulfilment of the noble goals enshrined in the Charter, namely "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".

70. Mr. NEBIE (Burkina Faso) noted that the evolution of international relations had accelerated and stressed that the priority formerly given to the balance of terror and to ideological struggles was no longer justifiable and that a new priority imposed itself for all countries - namely, the search for balanced development, both nationally and internationally, based on new solidarity and a new spirit of cooperation - and particularly on the political commitment so vitally needed to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

71. While the results of the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) had not been entirely satisfactory to the developing nations, it was hoped that in the future, the spirit which had inspired the Cartagena Commitment would enable UNCTAD to better fulfil its mission. He hoped that the newly formed standing committees and working groups would rapidly take steps to promote North-South trade on an equitable basis so that the developing nations could obtain the currency they so needed to give new impetus to their economies and to combat poverty. Burkina Faso attached particular importance to the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, and made an appeal that the promises made in Cartagena should be followed up by actions.

72. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had increased awareness of the need to protect the planet and to include environmental considerations in all development projects. In spite of disagreements regarding priorities and means, the texts adopted at the Rio Conference were encouraging. Burkina Faso hoped that the Commission on Sustainable Development would begin work immediately and have the support and means to implement fully and effectively the decisions made in Rio. He also welcomed the spirit of solidarity with which the international community had accepted the idea of drafting an international convention to combat desertification, particularly in Africa. That instrument should establish clear and precise technical and financial commitments.

73. The year 1992 had been marked by a third event, namely the consensus reached by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session on the urgent need to revitalize the world economy, on the link between sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and on the shortage of development assistance. The session had also addressed the important question of restructuring the Council. However, the high-level debate had not given rise to any concrete proposals. Burkina Faso hoped that, in the future, discussions would lead to commitments between the North and the South. Furthermore, he hoped to see better coordination of development activities through a strengthening of ties between international financial institutions and United Nations bodies.

74. Turning to the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s adopted by the General Assembly as its forty-sixth session, he said that Burkina Faso, having noted the failure of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, hoped that the one year spent on informing the international community would rapidly be followed by concrete actions.

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(Mr. Nebie, Burkina Faso)

75. Similarly, the problems of debt, population and energy required concrete proposals from the Committee. In those areas as in others, political commitment was essential, since experience had shown that when there was a will to do so, United Nations resolutions could be fully implemented.

76. Mr. LOEIS (Indonesia) stressed the primacy of economics in the post-cold-war era, noting that development and the eradication of poverty had become pressing issues which should be placed at the top of the global agenda.

77. Despite the new-found emphasis on growth in the developing countries, Indonesia remained gravely concerned that the sluggish world economy was in the midst of its deepest recession since the Second World War, with serious consequences for those countries. In 1991, world output had declined for the first time in over four decades. In general, the developing countries had sustained sharp reversals and with few exceptions continued to stagnate. Africa had been hardest hit, while the economies in transition were also continuing to falter. Disparities and uncertainties continued unabated and the gap between rich and poor countries was further widening, while the political and social fabric of many developing countries was undergoing acute strain. There was an overall deterioration in international economic relations. The stalled Uruguay Round could result in a surge of protectionism and managed trade. The contraction in financial flows for development had not relented and the debt burden afflicting many developing countries had not been adequately redressed. Rather, funds continued to be transferred from the developing to the developed countries and to international financial institutions, while official development assistance was increasingly accompanied by conditionality.

78. In the face of those constraints, the already formidable task of development had become increasingly difficult. It was recognized that development and the eradication of poverty were mainly the responsibilities of individual sovereign States. The majority of developing countries were now orienting their policies towards people-centered strategies and were placing greater emphasis on the development of human resources with the ultimate objective of improving the human condition. While in an era of growing interdependence national autonomy was central to sustainable development, it was essential that the adjustment efforts made by the developing countries should be matched by support from outside; moreover, if the industrialized North was to sustain its current level of prosperity, it must contribute to the development and stability of the countries of the South. The establishment of such a global partnership for development required a detailed re-examination of the foundations of global socio-economic relations. Otherwise, the asymmetries which impeded progress in the developing countries would marginalize their interests.

79. In order to redress those imbalances and to promote development effectively, it was imperative that North and South work together to restructure the international economic system in an equitable manner - an

(Mr. Loeis, Indonesia)

objective which could only be achieved through constructive negotiation. Management of interdependence should proceed on the basis of mutual interests and shared responsibility.

80. The emergence of such a global consensus on the need for more equitable international economic relations should give new impetus to efforts to resolve the key issues of development. In that spirit, it was important that the Uruguay Round negotiations, which were currently stalled, should be brought to a balanced conclusion for equitable development and prosperity for all could be ensured only within the framework of an international trading system that was free, open, rule-based and non-discriminatory. The malaise in the commodity markets, where prices were now at their lowest level, could also be alleviated through meaningful negotiations. At the same time, international cooperation should be focused on economic diversification, particularly in the case of countries whose economies were dependent on a single commodity. In that connection, Indonesia supported the proposal for the convening of an international conference on commodities.

81. External debt had drained the resources of many developing countries and undermined their development efforts. It was thus urgent to find a comprehensive and durable solution to that serious problem, inter alia, through a significant reduction in the stock and service of all kinds of debt. Indonesia therefore supported the proposal for the creation of an advisory commission on debt and development. It was also essential to increase financial flows in the related field of development financing. The international monetary and financial system was still not contributing adequately to development and remained undemocratic. Indonesia therefore supported the Secretary-General's call for the convening of an international conference on development financing in particular to address the specific needs of developing countries during the current decade.

82. A spirit of cooperation had been very much in evidence at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Agenda 21 reflected the political commitment of Governments to take the measures required to secure a habitable planet. The Commission on Sustainable Development was thus to be responsible for moving Agenda 21 forward, in particular on the issues of environment and development. In that connection, his delegation attached great importance to the initiative taken by the Second Committee to establish an ad hoc working group for informal consultations. The developed countries and other countries in a position to do so should make initial financial commitments to give effect to the decisions of the Rio Conference, and report on that topic during the current session.

83. As for operational activities for development it was necessary to increase the effectiveness and improve the delivery programmes, while respecting the principles of neutrality and non-conditionality. What was imperative, however, was that the overall level of resources allocated to those activities should be increased on a predictable and assured basis.

(Mr. Loeis, Indonesia)

84. The United Nations had a unique role to play in the development field. As the embodiment of multilateralism, it was an institution singularly competent to create a just and equitable new world order. The process of reform and revitalization of the Organization should be transparent, democratic and comprehensive. A balanced relationship should be established between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and the latter should be strengthened appropriately. Many useful changes had already been made and some interesting proposals had been put forward with a view to the revitalization and restructuring of the economic and social sectors. In that connection, decisions concerning such changes should be based on the principles and guidelines set out in General Assembly resolution 45/264 and should accord with the democratic principles underlying the United Nations decision-making process. For that reason, his delegation supported the calls for the further democratization of the Organization, particularly those voiced at the Summit meeting of the Non-aligned Countries which had recently taken place in Jakarta.

85. With the end of the cold war, the world had moved beyond bipolar confrontation. It was now up to each country to ensure that the period of East-West confrontation was not replaced by a North-South division. It was in the interests of the international community to choose the path of multilateral cooperation for development in the context of a new world order capable of ensuring peace, prosperity and justice for all.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
4th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 6 October 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON	(Uruguay)
later:	Miss DIOP (Vice-Chairman)	(Senegal)
later:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON	(Uruguay)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that its revised programme of work, had been issued as document A/C.2/47/L.6. He noted that he had invited Mr. Enrique Iglesias, Director of the Inter-American Development Bank, to participate in a first informal exchange of views with delegations of the Second Committee.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

2. Mrs. FRECHETTE (Canada) said that her country, firmly convinced that the United Nations had a central role to play in the economic sector, was more than ready to participate in the collective task of defining a programme in that field which reflected the realities of the present day and would make it possible to meet the challenges of tomorrow. The economic sector of the United Nations had not yet benefited from the new impulse which the end of the cold war had brought to the sector of peace and security. It was essential for the United Nations to define the basic issues of development and economic cooperation. To do so, the Organization must concentrate its efforts on those functions which it alone was mandated to exercise. Without trying to alter the mandates of GATT, IMF, the World Bank or the regional banks, the United Nations could, as a world-scale political body, bring into focus the global economic challenges by making sure that economic and social issues, particularly those of the developing countries, remained at the centre of the international strategies and priorities of Governments.

3. Two major events had taken place in the course of the year just gone by: first, UNCTAD at its Cartagena meeting, had adopted a programme specifically tailored to the needs of the developing countries. Secondly, progress had been made at the most recent session of the Economic and Social Council, and it was Canada's hope that at the corresponding session next year more ministers would take part.

4. With the restructuring and revitalization of the economic sector as its target, the Committee should start its work by taking as its point of departure resolution 45/264, which had had the merit of raising the real questions and setting the problems out in order, with its references to the division of labour between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, the need to review the role of the Council, the complementarity of the work of the subsidiary organs and institutions, and the role of the Secretariat. Canada attached high priority to reforming the development system of the United Nations. Such a reform should give the Economic and Social Council a role of political orientation and encouragement by assigning it powers to direct the bodies concerned with development, to redefine the governing bodies of the agencies in order to refocus their attention on the operational aspects and on programme implementation and, lastly, to review the

(Mrs. Frechette, Canada)

structure of coordination in the field with regard both to the appointment of a resident coordinator and integrated country programming. Those elements, together with adequate, stable and predictable financing, could increase the value of the system and its capacity to react. Canada hoped that consensus would be achieved on those proposals at the forty-seventh session.

5. At the Rio Summit, the international community had rallied to the principle of sustainable development, the cornerstone of Canadian policy regarding cooperation and development. The interest aroused by the follow-up to that conference showed how eager Governments and the United Nations were to give form and specific content to that principle. The new Commission on Sustainable Development should be established without delay and endowed with a programme and methods of work which would enable it to provide effective and dynamic follow-up to the Rio decisions. The non-governmental organizations should be actively associated in the Commission's work. In that context, Canada recalled the agreement at Rio on convening an international conference on deep-sea fishing.

6. Regarding the humanitarian assistance sector, Canada believed the establishment of the post of United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator to be very useful. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs had had little time to show what it could do and lacked the resources to exercise fully its mandate not only to respond to but also to predict emergencies. The delay, which current conditions made it impossible to overcome, was aggravated by the poverty, ethnic tensions and natural disasters, which gave rise to waves of refugees and uncontrolled movements of population. The gravity of those problems demanded still closer coordination between United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the whole international community, and full support for the Coordinator.

7. Food and agriculture were part of the main sectors of operational activity that required restructuring. A distinction must be established between the advisory, analytical and research functions of a "new-style" World Food Council and the vital functions of coordination and provision of impetus that should be assumed by a revitalized Economic and Social Council, supported by a strong Secretariat. There again, the functional structure must be better defined, a clear distinction made between the decision-making and the executive level, and action taken to see that the Secretariat had an overall view of the system. Canada was convinced that, with the proposed reforms put into effect, the system could be improved. The Secretariat should play a crucial role in pursuit of the objectives of the revitalization of the economic sector. Those objectives would be better served if the Department of Economic and Social Development were to concentrate its efforts on internal coordination, analysis and research and on the support it should provide to the Economic and Social Council and leave the task of technical cooperation to other United Nations bodies. The Department should be distinguished by its intellectual leadership rather than the number of its activities. General Assembly resolution 45/264 recalled that the socio-economic goals of the

(Mrs. Frechette, Canada)

United Nations would remain unachievable in the absence of political will, which was an essential prerequisite for enhancing international cooperation. Only such cooperation would make possible a real revitalization of the system based on a common determination to strengthen the credibility, relevance and performance of the United Nations economic machinery. Frustrations and delays demanded that it should be done immediately. In the opinion of the Canadian delegation, priority should be given to the restructuring so that the multilateral system could properly serve the collective will of all States.

8. Mr. MUCHANGA (Zambia) said that the end of the cold war, along with the critical issues of racial justice, human rights, democracy and sustainable development were defining a new era of international relations which pointed to the primacy of economics over ideology. The world of today would have to arrive at behaviours and mechanisms based on cooperation in order to build a world of mutual accommodation and full participation in common endeavours. That was the only way to entrench universal appeals towards racial justice, democracy, human rights and economic adjustment.

9. The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was a new attempt to galvanize international responsibility, something which had not been achieved through the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. Through the New Agenda, the international community was attempting to banish the spectre of poverty now confronting much of Africa, host to 32 of the world's 47 least developed countries. As the Secretary-General had pointed out, Africa was the only region in the world where the number of people living in poverty was, if current trends continued, likely to increase by the year 2000. The severe global recession and the absence of broadly based economic growth in Africa had reduced the demand for labour and brought about a breakdown of social services, all of which did not augur well for recovery. Putting Africa back on the road to sustainable development went beyond simple generosity and would be a direct contribution to protecting the continent's environment, for the benefit of the entire planet. It was therefore to be hoped that the international community would adopt a more responsive attitude to the social, economic and ecological crises facing Africa.

10. The Secretary-General had further stated that Africa was the only region in the world whose total debt equalled or exceeded its economic output. Through debt-reduction packages, the international community could redress Africa's economic plight, support the economic reform processes currently under way and improve the continent's economic prospects.

11. The severe drought conditions prevailing in southern Africa had had a negative impact on the socio-economic base of the region, while efforts to increase food production had been significantly eroded, and the physical environment had been made more fragile. His Government was grateful for the emergency humanitarian and relief assistance that had been provided to southern Africa.

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(Mr. Muchanga, Zambia)

12. The drought conditions in southern Africa, however, had not stopped the region from establishing conditions favourable for peace. The people of Angola had recently finished democratic elections which by most accounts would be certified free and fair, and it only remained for all political forces to respect the will of the people. The people of Mozambique would soon enter a new era of harmony with the signing of the cease-fire agreement on 4 October 1992. The resumption of dialogue among the political forces in South Africa had improved the prospects for eliminating apartheid.

13. Southern Africa had also made progress in the area of economic integration. The creation of the Southern African Development Community to replace the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) had established obligations relating to issues of human rights, democracy and economic policy coordination among Member States. Thus, the people of southern Africa would be in a stronger position to determine the direction of economic integration. The drought situation in southern Africa had highlighted the weaknesses of the region's agricultural bases and of the transport and communication systems, and had led to the creation of structures that would promote the development process. Zambia, as current Chairman of the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States, had stressed the need to eliminate duplication of efforts in the field of regional integration. It had felt that the merger of the Preferential Trade Area and the former Southern African Development Coordination Conference was necessary. As the Organization of African Unity began to tackle the critical issue of creating an African Economic Community, the goal of unifying regional integration bodies would be central to any future strategy of developing harmonized African markets and creating dynamic and long-term economic relationships among African economies.

14. In October 1992, the people of Zambia had shown its devotion to democracy by holding peaceful, free and fair elections. Immediately after the elections, it had embarked on a complex task of economic reconstruction. The international community had responded by providing aid commitments that fully met requirements for the year ahead, including those related to the drought situation. The members of the Paris Club had also agreed to debt write-offs and rescheduling arrangements that embodied reduced interest rates and extended maturities.

15. Consolidating democracy while at the same time carrying out painful structural adjustment measures was a complex process without historical precedent. In Zambia, the structural adjustment had increased the economic insecurity of vulnerable groups. These groups had used their guaranteed freedoms to demand wage increases. A wave of strikes had paralysed the country for three months and had dampened business confidence. In order to assuage the well-founded fears of those groups and, in the process, keep the economy working, the Government had established a system of targeted transfers and safety nets that would mitigate the impact of adjustment. The Government would, in 1994, also undertake a poverty assessment with a view to remedying

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the situation. The Government realized, just as the Secretary-General had, that poverty was infertile soil for democracy.

16. The lesson of experience was that the nations of the world brought to the United Nations and to other multilateral forums problems that no single nation could handle on its own. One important lesson of the Gulf war had been that it was possible to realize collective goals through the United Nations. The problems of development called for more than a feeble dialogue; sustainable development must become a challenge to be met and overcome on a universal scale. The international community must think anew and act anew about cooperation in order to enhance the prospects of growth and empowerment in the now distressed developing world, where four fifths of the world's population cried out for shared economic progress. Without equity in the international economy, the environment would be the common victim. There was no more compelling truth to motivate the international community to reshape international cooperation through a harmonious and constructive North-South dialogue.

17. Mr. MARUYAMA KOIKE (Japan) said that it had now become possible to discuss development in the forums of the United Nations without engaging in ideological debate; as the majority of Member States were shifting to market-oriented economies, it was also possible to proceed in a pragmatic manner. That change had coincided with the emergence of the idea of sustainable development, based on the idea that environmental protection was an integral part of the development process, which had been universally adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. The forty-seventh session of the General Assembly must establish a framework for following up the achievements of the Rio Conference. In order to meet expectations in the economic and social fields, the United Nations must revitalize and restructure its system. That was one of the most important items on the agenda of the current session.

18. The World Economic Survey showed that economic performance had varied: while aggregate output for the developing countries had maintained a growth rate above 3 per cent, the growth rate of developed market economies had slowed from 2.6 per cent in 1990 to 0.9 per cent in 1991. The economies in transition had shown a negative growth rate of about minus 16 per cent, while the Latin American and Caribbean region had shown a positive growth rate of around 2.6 per cent, and South and East Asia had continued to grow rapidly, at a rate of over 5 per cent. Those achievements were attributable in part to the implementation of stabilization and restructuring measures designed to encourage private initiative. The Latin American and Caribbean countries had succeeded in curbing inflation, while the South and East Asian economies had achieved an increased volume of exports and robust domestic demand. Many severely indebted countries were becoming more creditworthy, and the poorest countries had received new concessions. Special extended rescheduling terms had been accorded to 13 of them.

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19. The international community should continue to support the efforts of the developing countries. The developed countries, particularly the major ones, must achieve economic recovery through balanced monetary and fiscal policies. In the wake of the cold war, strong world economic growth was needed. Non-inflationary growth in industrialized countries would contribute to growth in developing countries. It was also crucial to bring the Uruguay Round and the negotiations on the replenishment of the resources of the International Development Association (IDA) to an early and successful conclusion. Likewise, it was extremely important for not only the health of the world economy but also world political stability and security that the countries of the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe succeed in their economic transition. That transition would require time and tenacity, and the international community should provide appropriate assistance. Two ministerial-level conferences had been held for the purpose of coordinating humanitarian and technical assistance to the former Soviet Union: one in Washington in January and the other in Lisbon in May. A third was scheduled for Tokyo in October.

20. Enormous problems persisted in many African countries, particularly in the sub-Saharan region, where poverty had been exacerbated in recent years by explosive population growth, desertification and the influx of refugees and displaced persons. Total output had grown by 3 per cent in 1991, but population had grown faster. In eastern and southern Africa, drought had cut food production by nearly half. It was essential that the United Nations continue to give Africa top priority and maintain the momentum that had led to the adoption, at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. In order to assist development in Africa, particularly in the sub-Saharan region, and to increase awareness of that issue, the Japanese Government planned to host a conference for the development of Africa in Tokyo in the autumn of 1993.

21. The concept of sustainable development promoted at the Rio Conference was based on the need to reconcile development and environmental protection. Population was a key factor in the struggle to achieve sustainable development. In many instances, population growth had negated the impressive progress that developing countries had made in increasing income and expanding health and education services. Because population growth was closely linked to the degradation of the environment, there could be no hope of breaking the vicious cycle of poverty, economic stagnation and environmental degradation unless appropriate population policies were built into development programmes.

22. In that context, the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Egypt in September 1994, was of the greatest importance. As part of the preparatory process, Japan wished to host a meeting of eminent demographers with the cooperation of the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations University.

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23. In accordance with resolution 45/264, the General Assembly would be taking up the issue of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. It would also be discussing the reform of the Economic and Social Council, particularly with respect to its operational activities, and would be taking decisions on the establishment of a Commission on Sustainable Development and on other issues involving the role and functions of the Council. Whether the subject was sustainable development or operational activities, any reform must enhance the Council's coordination function and avoid further fragmentation of the United Nations system or further duplication of activities. His delegation would elaborate on its thinking in the discussion of those specific items. The United Nations and its Member States must meet the unprecedented challenges presented by the end of the cold war and make the most of the opportunities offered.

24. Mr. JIN Yongjian (China) expressed deep concern at the unbalanced development of the world economy, the widening gap between North and South and the fact that the peace and development for which the people of the world had longed had not come with the end of the cold war. The current world economy was unbalanced, unstable and uncoordinated. In addition to the chaos on financial markets in Western Europe, the coordination of economic policies among the major developed countries had failed to work, with serious consequences for world economic growth and for the economic development of developing countries. Over the past year, developing countries had been making active efforts to adjust and reform their domestic economies. On the whole, however, they had not achieved the expected results. While most developing countries had voluntarily and unilaterally opened their markets and liberalized their trade, developed countries had become more protectionist and had increased their trade barriers; the Uruguay Round was still deadlocked. While developing countries had endeavoured to adjust their economic structures, developed countries had reduced their financial assistance and imposed stringent political conditions. While developing countries were seeking to integrate their economies into the world economy, a small number of developed countries continued to dominate and manipulate the decision-making process and coordination of that economy. Developing countries were being further marginalized and the gap between them and the developed countries in the economic, scientific and technological fields was steadily widening. The structure of the world economy remained unjust and inequitable and the deterioration of the global economic environment remained the main obstacle to efforts to lift developing countries out of poverty.

25. During the period of transition to multipolarity, a new order based on justice and equity must be gradually established. The United Nations had held a number of important meetings in recent years aimed at promoting international cooperation for development in the 1990s. Nevertheless, the developing countries continued to wonder whether the international community, and developed countries in particular, would respond positively to their needs by carrying out the necessary reforms in the areas of trade and external debt,

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abandoning their discriminatory policies, to bringing the Uruguay Round to a successful conclusion, to strengthening the coordination of economic policies and ensuring the effective participation of developing countries. The United Nations had a unique role to play in that process. It should give development first priority in economic forums and should supervise the implementation of the important instruments it adopted. It should also seize the opportunity to strengthen its role in the field of economic and social development through its ongoing restructuring effort.

26. Revitalization in the economic and social fields was high on the agenda. Various parties had stated their views. China supported all reform measures aimed at raising the efficiency of the Organization, strengthening international cooperation and promoting the development of the developing countries. The reform must observe the relevant provisions of the Charter, however, and should not compromise Member States' sovereignty or be used as a pretext for imposing conditionality on assistance provided through the United Nations system. Resolution 45/264 set forth explicit objectives and important principles in that regard. No reform measure going beyond the content of that resolution would be desirable. China had made specific suggestions to the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group of the Economic and Social Council.

27. Regarding follow-up to the Rio Conference, his delegation was in favour of establishing a new global partnership for the realization of the objectives of sustainable development. The end of the Conference did not mean "mission accomplished"; on the contrary, the international community must shoulder its responsibilities and take effective follow-up action, and the developed countries should fulfil their commitment to providing "new and additional" financial resources and to transferring technology on preferential terms. With regard to the establishment of a Commission on Sustainable Development, China hoped that all parties would abide by the principles embodied in the Rio Declaration and act in a spirit of equity and mutual benefit.

28. With regard to operational activities for development, resolutions on UNDP and on new dimensions for technical cooperation were still highly significant and should be reflected in the on-going reform. Meanwhile, interpretations of resolution 44/211 continued to vary from one agency to another. The questions of "national execution" of projects and decentralization were yet to be genuinely resolved. National execution was a very important means of increasing the self-reliance capability of the recipient State, which should, for instance, have the right to review and approve individual projects, because it was at the national level that the needs in terms of operational activities for development were best known. His delegation hoped that the question would be resolved once and for all on the occasion of the triennial policy review. In that connection, the shortage of financial resources was a major issue. The annual growth rate of resources allocated to such activities was far lower than that stipulated by United Nations resolutions. His delegation hoped, therefore, that donor countries would increase their contributions.

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29. China's economic outlook was a matter of interest to the whole world. Reform in China had now entered a crucial stage. It would bring about a fundamental change in the old system, which constrained productivity, and would establish a new system full of vitality. China would speed up efforts to transform State enterprises, develop a market-oriented structure, reform distribution and social security systems and improve governmental functions. At the same time, it would endeavour to absorb larger amounts of foreign capital, resources and technologies. It would also undertake reforms in the political field. China's political stability, successful reforms and healthy economic development would make a significant contribution to world peace and development.

30. Miss Diop (Senegal), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

31. Mr. BARAC (Romania) said that 1991 had been a very difficult year for the world economy; in that year, for the first time since the Second World War, the world output of goods and services had fallen. The main reason for that situation had been the disruption of the economies of the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, particularly since 1990. As rightly stated in the World Economic Survey 1992, the region was in the grip of a savage economic contraction. Meanwhile, in the developing countries, overall economic growth - which had averaged about 3.4 per cent, approximately the same as in 1989 and 1990 - had remained sluggish. Growth in the developed countries had fallen to under 1 per cent in 1991.

32. The economic recession in the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union reflected the huge economic and social problems facing the countries in transition. Those problems, which were examined in depth in the Secretary-General's report on the impact of the recent evolution of East-West relations on the growth of the world economy (A/47/403), were unprecedented in magnitude, stemming as they did from a complete change in the system, not only in economic but also in social and political terms. In that process, the countries in transition were severely constrained by a shortage of resources, a lack of technical skills, especially managerial skills, and outdated technologies and production structures. Their level of development was comparable to that of middle-income developing countries.

33. The reforms undertaken in those countries would undoubtedly generate the revitalization of economic growth and sustainable development. A successful transition and resumed growth in Eastern Europe would benefit the world economy as a whole, as many ministers had stated during the debate in the high-level segment of the July 1992 session of the Economic and Social Council.

34. The resumption of growth in the countries in transition would stabilize their political and social situation and, by extension, that of the European continent as a whole. Meanwhile, the measures adopted entailed considerable social cost and gave rise to obstacles that could not be overcome without external support, as was recognized, moreover, by the Secretary-General in his

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report on the implementation of the International Development Strategy (E/1992/74). All countries in transition should therefore be given considerable international assistance, which should be targeted and should be consistent with the transformation policies which those countries had chosen to implement.

35. As Mr. Douglas Hurd, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, had said in his statement to the plenary of the General Assembly in his capacity as President of the Council of Ministers of the European Communities, the European Community and its member States fully supported the transition to democracy and to a market economy by the countries in transition and welcomed the results already achieved.

36. Romania was most grateful to the European Community for the support it had received, which it urgently needed to carry out its reforms. The main objectives of those reforms were similar to those of the other countries in transition in the region, namely democracy and a market economy. The ways and means of achieving them were also the same: respect for human rights, political pluralism, free and fair elections, separation of powers and guarantees of economic freedom.

37. At the same time, the transition in Romania had some special features. The transition had begun violently, with a revolution in which there had been bloodshed. The collapse overnight of a dictatorial political system which had been over-present in all aspects of the country's life had led to the disintegration of the economic system. A majority of the population was completely ignorant of the mechanisms of real democracy and the market economy. Lastly, an economic policy focused on forced industrialization had not capitalized on the country's comparative advantages.

38. Nevertheless, since the past year, a number of political, social and economic measures had been taken in order to open the road to a market economy in Romania. Following a land reform, 80 per cent of the total arable land was now in private ownership. A law on privatization was being implemented with the assistance of several foreign institutions and programmes and a number of State enterprises would soon be privatized. A special programme for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises had been set up with the help of the PHARE Programme. Prices had been almost completely freed; foreign trade had been completely deregulated and the monopolies broken. Since 15 November 1991, exchange rates had been unified and measures had been taken for the reopening of the stock exchange. Romania had thus succeeded in freeing itself from the restraints of the command economy and should become more and more attractive to foreign investment. After laying the foundations of a market economy, Romania was ready to begin a structural reform, including an economic stabilization programme supported by a loan from the International Monetary Fund.

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39. Along the same lines, a round table organized at Bucharest from 4 to 6 September 1992 under the auspices of UNDP and in cooperation with the Romanian Government, for the purpose of examining the global changes in the political and economic environment, had analysed in depth the entire complex process of transition. It had been recognized that applying existing models would not solve the problem of defining the strategy of the transition process and that only a carefully designed strategy based on the lessons of preceding stages could lead to successful transformations.

40. Lastly, he pointed out that Romania had been one of the countries most severaly affected by the Gulf crisis and that the direct losses it had suffered as a result of the crisis amounted to $3 billion. Moreover, Romania was at present deeply concerned by the very high costs that would be entailed by its implementation of the Security Council resolutions on Yugoslavia. That was why his Government wished the Security Council to devise a set of measures that could help States meet the economic difficulties entailed by the implementation of sanctions. For example, a standing Compensation Fund, to be administered by the Security Council, could be set up. The existence of such a fund would encourage States to cooperate with the Council in the management of crisis situations.

41. Mr. YEMEL (Turkey) said that the economic policies of all countries were in the process of converging and were geared towards achieving a market economy. In order to sustain that trend, the international economic environment had to be favourable. But, for the first time in 50 years, world output had fallen.

42. The developing countries were still faced with heavy foreign debt, unfavourable terms of trade, pervasive poverty and environmental degradation. The countries of the European Community faced uncertainties in monetary questions and, like most of the industrialized countries, persistent recession and unemployment. The economies in transition in Central and Eastern Europe had continued to deteriorate.

43. It was against that background that the conclusion, after many years of discussion, of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations was awaited. It was crucial to avoid a recrudescence of protectionism as it was only through free trade that the flow of foreign investment into the developing countries and their integration into the world economy could be promoted.

44. Although important strides had been made in overcoming the debt crisis, it was still acute, especially for low-income countries, and required close monitoring if social and political upheavals were to be avoided.

45. It was also necessary to ensure that the pledges made during the Conference on Environment and Development were respected by all.

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46. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) said that during the discussions in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly and in the Second Committee, many representatives had asserted that the democratic victory in the cold war had opened up unique opportunities for addressing, through the joint efforts of States, the most acute problems of humanity. But it must be remembered that the liberation of humanity from totalitarianism entailed formidable costs. A large group of countries, to which Russia belonged, was encountering very serious problems during the current period of transition which could certainly not be resolved quickly. That situation had been aggravated by the fact that the response of the more prosperous countries had not been adequately dynamic. Protectionist barriers still existed and the volume and quality of direct private investment in the economies in transition were clearly inadequate. It went without saying that those comments did not mean that the countries in transition were not grateful for the international help they had been given.

47. For those reasons, it was essential for the socio-economic sector of the United Nations to pay considerably more attention to the problems of economies in transition. That strategic goal was fully in keeping with the universal character of the Organization and would help to meet the needs of a large part of the world community. The fact was that today dozens of countries in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa were going through different stages of the transition to a market economy. That new strategic goal would also give a new impetus to the work of the socio-economic sector of the United Nations and contribute to its revitalization.

48. Russia fully supported the new approach enunciated by Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali in a number of documents, including his report on the work of the Organization (A/47/1) and his report during the ministerial meeting that had taken place during the Economic and Social Council's summer session (E/1992/82), in which he advocated a determined joint effort aimed at a comprehensive resolution of world problems in their many aspects. At the current stage, the problem of developing a new model for multilateral economic negotiations had become a practical need. That model should be more flexible and should give more attention to the economic or environmental dangers to security and preventive measures against them. The task was especially timely at present, when large trade groupings were emerging and new States were coming into being, with the unpredictable regional and continent-wide consequences that would entail, including those of the aggravation of migratory flows.

49. Since the last session of the General Assembly, several major events had taken place, including the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which had enabled the international community to express a new consensus. It was to be hoped that the high-level commission on sustainable development to be established during the current session would ensure the effective multilateral cooperation required in that area in the interests of all States. The decisions taken at UNCTAD - VIII, in the "Cartagena spirit", which aimed at the adjustment of that international organization to the new

(Mr. Kudryavtsev, Russian Federation)

goals of international trade, took into due consideration the economies in transition and should contribute to their integration into the world economy.

50. It would scarcely seem an exaggeration to say that one of the main factors which might now, and still more in the long term, affect the dynamics of world economic relations was the reform of the Russian economy. That reform consisted of basic structural transformations, one of the main objectives of which was to encourage demand with a view to creating new jobs and attracting foreign investment, since the economy could only be revitalized by creating a genuine market and by developing investment. That was why current legislation in Russia envisaged a regime which was equally favourable to foreign investors and indigenous enterprises. International guarantees for foreign investors in Russia were in the course of preparation, in particular in the form of bilateral agreements. So far, 14 agreements of that kind had been concluded. Russia had also acceded to a number of international agreements with investment-related aspects, and was contemplating the establishment of an independent body to ensure foreign capital against political risks. In addition, domestic legislation on investments had accelerated. The Parliament of the Russian Federation was currently examining a whole range of texts to that effect, in particular a bill on free economic zones and a series of amendments to the law relating to foreign investments.

51. Once that problem had been resolved, new opportunities for developing cooperation in respect of investments and trade would emerge, to the benefit of all. In the last analysis, it was not only the partners in those new economic relations which would be the beneficiaries, but all the members of the world community, irrespective of their geographical location and their socio-economic level.

52. Ms. FREUDENSCHUSS-REICHL (Austria) said that a new concept of security was emerging which encompassed both economic and social aspects and respect for human rights and the environment; she hoped that that would lead to greater solidarity between nations.

53. Recognizing the role of the United Nations system in that context, her delegation attached the highest importance to the efforts being made to enhance the Organization's capability in order to enable it to discharge its responsibilities under the Charter. It was crucial to ensure that decisions on institutional reform were not only compatible, but mutually reinforcing.

54. In the economic and social fields, it was therefore essential that the United Nations concentrate its activities on those aspects where it could in fact have a decisive effect. The United Nations was uniquely suited to elaborate new concepts of international cooperation. It was also in a position to formulate an integrated response to the major challenge of the contemporary world, namely the establishment of patterns of development that were sustainable both in the North and the South.

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(Ms. Freudenschuss-Reichl, Austria)

55. Furthermore, thanks to its vast wealth of data and analysis, the United Nations could play a particularly useful role by providing policy advice, particularly in respect of cross-sectoral issues. It would therefore be useful to consolidate its research and analytical capabilities. Her delegation had therefore proposed the establishment of an integrated reporting system which would culminate in the preparation of a report on the status of the world's sustainable development.

56. Lastly, through its operational activities, the United Nations system had an essential role to play in the field of development cooperation. At the same time, it was essential to ensure that the assistance it provided continued to be universal, neutral, non-political and flexible, and that it was made available in the form of grants which were not tied to conditions.

57. Mr. Piriz-Ballon (Uruguay) resumed the Chair.

58. Mr. BATHIA (International Monetary Fund) noted that the agenda of the Second Committee was forward-looking, and more comprehensive and truly global in concept. Thus the Committee was to debate the progress achieved in the implementation of various recently-adopted instruments in the economic and social spheres, and also in the field of the environment. There would also be linkage with the discussions to be held in the Third Committee on the possibility of holding a summit meeting on social issues.

59. The first years of the current decade had been characterized by a welcome paradox. Some 35 developing countries had achieved satisfactory economic results through the implementation of structural adjustment policies enabling them to reduce their budgetary deficits, liberalize external trade and promote private enterprise. They had succeeded in reducing their debt and could look forward to a continuing growth in their economies. The industrialized countries, on the other hand, had not carried out structural reform and had not balanced their budgets, and had seen a slower rate of growth, while unemployment had increased and their cooperative arrangements had declined. It was thus apparent that reforms were necessary in both the developing countries and the developed countries, and that such reforms were required for macro-economic stabilization, to ensure greater play for market forces, and structural adjustment.

60. The countries of central and eastern Europe, although embarked upon the transition to a market economy, were still subject to problems relating to structural distortion. In that connection, the Fund stressed the need for systematic reform aimed at developing markets and stimulating private enterprise. Those countries were also in need of financial and technical assistance. The same was true for many of the developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

61. There was talk too often of a shortage of investment capital and of structural reforms. In fact, it was not so much a matter of shortage as of

(Mr. Bathia, IMF)

misuse of capital and savings. Against that background, it was scarcely to be expected that there would be a growth in official development assistance in the immediate future. Admittedly, there had been a substantial increase in the transfer of resources to the developing countries, but it would be unrealistic to count on overall external financing for the activities envisaged under the International Development Strategy and other United Nations programmes. It was time to cut the umbilical cord between growth in the developing countries and foreign aid. Such countries should seize the opportunity and, by themselves, endeavour to eliminate poverty. It would be recalled that, when the Strategy had been adopted, it had been decided that the Strategy would be adjusted as the needs of the world situation required. Accordingly, account should be taken, in considering the progress achieved in its implementation, of developments in the relationship between economic growth on the one hand, and domestic policies and external assistance on the other.

62. It remained the case that the situation prevailing in the industrialized countries affected that of the developing countries, and that interdependence was indeed a reality. It was thus in the interests of all that the developed countries should re-establish a stable monetary framework and economic recovery. In the light of the inadequacy of cooperative arrangements, various appeals had been made for the Fund to assess more actively the status of those arrangements. The Executive Board would consider that issue in the coming months and would report to the Board of Governors.

63. In connection with the revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, the Secretary-General had, like many others, emphasized the need for the collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions. For some years the Fund had been intensifying its cooperation with the United Nations, on a reciprocally advantageous basis. It hoped to be involved in the Committee's deliberations in a mutually satisfactory manner as and when issues of common concern were raised.

64. Mr. MROZIEWICZ (Poland) said that while world output in 1992 was practically stagnant, there were wide disparities among regions. Above all, a protracted decline in production had been experienced in the transition countries, amounting to some 30 per cent over the past two years. There were very few examples in modern economic history where a whole region had experienced such a critical situation.

65. However, that global transition opened up unprecedented prospects. There was wider acceptance of the concept of a form of development which was people-oriented, equitable and sustainable. Such development could be sustained only by unleashing the creative energies of all people through a competitive market mechanism. Structural adjustment and good economic governance in conditions of democracy and respect for human rights were essential factors in bringing about the sustained development to which all countries aspired.

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(Mr. Mroziewicz, Poland)

66. Multilateral cooperation played a fundamental role in that respect and its effectiveness depended to a large extent on the concerted efforts of the United Nations. The Polish delegation noted with satisfaction that many efforts had recently been undertaken to revitalize the United Nations system, particularly in the economic and social fields. It noted with particular interest the views expressed on the linkages between the political, economic and social tasks of the Organization, the respective roles of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and the need to review the economic and social agenda and to establish a balance between functions performed at Headquarters and those carried out by the United Nations system at country and regional levels. The Secretary-General rightly placed an emphasis on the interdependence between national efforts at revitalizing growth and development and the harmonization of international economic and social policies, which was considered as part of an integrated approach to peace-building and collective security.

67. There was a need to strengthen the role of the United Nations in the area of social development. The promotion of integrated economic and social policies, focused on the human factor, was increasingly gaining support from Member States. By addressing such essential issues as human rights and social justice, which were strictly connected with the economic performance of each country, the United Nations would be able to approach key global issues in an integrated manner. The revitalization of economic cooperation within the United Nations should be an important element of the reform process. United Nations activities at the regional level should be carefully tuned to and integrated with the efforts of the Governments concerned. They should also be of practical application in order to attract wider involvement on the part of the business community. A modest increase in the budgets of the relevant organizations should be envisaged, particularly with regard to the Economic Commission for Europe. Strengthening international cooperation in Europe and assistance to the economies in transition were scarcely compatible with the principle of a zero-growth budget. Poland attached singular importance to the ongoing dialogue on operational activities for development. Many valuable ideas had been put forward which enjoyed wide support. Poland particularly endorsed a unified United Nations presence at country level, a presence which should be more effective and better coordinated.

68. In its deliberations, the Second Committee should take into account the results of the Earth Summit. The United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions included, should put the Rio Declaration higher on its agenda. The idea of creating a high-level Commission on Sustainable Development merited closer consideration. The debate should encompass such issues as eco-conversion, responsibility for nuclear accidents and efficient utilization of energy and non-renewable natural resources.

69. It was well-known that Poland was undergoing deep socio-economic changes and therefore paid special attention to those activities of the United Nations system which aimed at providing assistance to transition countries. Foreign

(Mr. Mroziewicz, Poland)

technical and capital assistance were important instruments supporting such processes. Poland stood ready to share its experience in that area with other countries. The process of reforming the Polish economic system was already well advanced, but it was not an easy task and the price to pay before the reforms bore fruit was very high. Nevertheless, there were already signs of progress in various sectors of the economy. Foreign assistance in management, entrepreneurship and privatization were worth pursuing. Some of the decisions taken at the Munich Summit indicated that greater attention should be given to transition in the former communist countries. One possible arrangement would be to admit those countries to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, a follow-up to the Marshall Plan, which had originally been meant to cover all of war-ravaged Europe. Poland had been unable to take a sovereign decision on participation. His country wished to join the European Community, and its concern to form ties with industrialized countries was demonstrated by its cooperation with Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and with its Eastern neighbours. It was also enhancing its cooperation with the developing countries, to which end it was ready to use multilateral forums to a greater extent.

70. Intensification of the multilateral dialogue which was taking place in the new political climate created favourable conditions for the reform of the United Nations. Moreover, a broad convergence of views had emerged on several key aspects of the future functioning of the Organization.

71. Mr. PAULINICH (Peru) said that, like the majority of developing countries, his country was starting to rebuild its economy. The results recorded in 1991 represented great progress compared with the previous year, particularly in terms of inflation, currency reserves and the budget deficit.

72. In order to consolidate that process and proceed with monetary and other reforms, as well as with privatization, a stage of sustained economic revitalization had to be undertaken that would enable a response to the basic needs of the most vulnerable sectors of the population. That could only be done if international economic circumstances were favourable. In that context, it was a matter of concern that, for the first time in 50 years, the world economy had produced negative results. It was therefore crucial that the industrialized countries should reduce their budget deficits and the subsidies which they gave to uncompetitive sectors of their economy. The Uruguay negotiations should also be completed as quickly as possible, the debt of middle-income countries should be alleviated and the transfer of resources, including by means of direct investment, should be increased.

73. World developments were such that the United Nations was in a better position to discharge its task under the Charter. It was therefore vital to enhance the process of economic and social revitalization, to define the respective tasks of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and to rationalize their agendas. The new methods of debate within the

Council should also be modified and the portion devoted to committees should be eliminated; the reports of subsidiary bodies could then be considered in the plenary meeting.

74. Discussions regarding the decision-making process where operational activities were concerned should take into account the need to find a happy medium between efficiency at the executive level and the principle of equitable geographical representation. The Economic and Social Council was the most appropriate forum in which to discuss and decide the policies the organizations of the system should follow. Any initiative for international cooperation should be adopted by the Council, thereby reinforcing its role of coordination.

75. The financing of operational activities should be steady and predictable but should not overburden the recipient countries. It was also important to uphold the principles of universality and impartiality governing the delivery of assistance by the organizations of the system. Assistance should continue to be given unconditionally.

76. The Committee should follow up at its current session the decisions taken at the Rio Conference and should set up the Commission on Sustainable Development, which would be asked to monitor the implementation of Agenda 21. The commitments undertaken at Rio regarding additional financial resources and the transfer of technology should be respected.

77. Mr. NOBILO (Croatia) said that the wheel of history was turning more and more quickly. The world had just witnessed the collapse of communism in most of Central and Eastern Europe and the setting in motion of democratic processes which had previously been suppressed or never existed in the region and which had been welcomed enthusiastically around the world. It had quickly become evident that, while those processes certainly brought new freedoms to the peoples of the region, they also created enormous structural problems. The first of those problems had been economic collapse, followed by social problems and ethnic strife. The dismantling of alliances and artificially created States had also occurred. Unfortunately, the post-Communist era had created one of the most serious crises in modern history, the war in what was once the State of Yugoslavia.

78. His delegation could testify to the efficiency of United Nations capabilities in the particular role of securing peace and stability in Croatia. Croatia shared the United Nations Members' enthusiasm for peace in the region, but also expected the United Nations to provide solutions to existing economic problems as well.

79. The follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was of the utmost importance for the developing world. There would have to be guidelines to assist implementation of the Rio measures, and decisions relating to the new Commission on Sustainable Development were

(Mr. Nobilo, Croatia)

required. An important task ahead was taking effective steps to ensure the application of Agenda 21, adopted at the Rio Conference. That was a sensitive question since, owing to the seriousness of their everyday problems, not all countries had yet worked out a generally accepted platform for sustainable development in economic, social and environmental terms.

80. As a new Member State, Croatia did not yet have much experience in organizational matters. However, it felt that there was some overlap in the system with regard to the implementation of development programmes. His delegation fully supported the Secretary-General's effort to restructure the system, which had already yielded some results, and was vitally interested in the triennial policy review of operational activities, which should lead to a real improvement in the delivery of development assistance.

81. Croatia had been particularly affected by the profound changes in the world in recent years. It had been built on the ruins of communism and born of the ill-conceived and artificially constructed State of the former Yugoslavia. Croatia was a developing country suffering from the results of a poorly managed communist economy, and also from brutal attacks and unprecedented destruction of its human, cultural and industrial resources. It continued to need extensive international support to start new development by mobilizing its potentially sound human and natural resources. Croatia needed international cooperation and assistance to eliminate the consequences of war, to facilitate its recovery and to alleviate the effects of the conflict in the neighbouring Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had caused an influx of refugees. Those problems needed to be resolved simultaneously. Croatia had set forth its position in document A/47/242. What had happened in Croatia constituted an example of an environmental disaster in the broadest sense of the word. Some parts of the country had been destroyed, the social balance had been severely damaged, part of the cultural heritage had disappeared, 10,000 people had lost their lives and more than 350,000 displaced persons had been severely traumatized. Croatia offered an excellent opportunity for the international community to apply its global development approach and provide an immediate response to humanitarian emergencies at the same time.

82. The CHAIRMAN drew representatives' attention to the Committee's revised work schedule (A/C.2/47/L.6).

83. Mr. BARNETT (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community, said he was most surprised that the consideration of item 90, regarding the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, had been postponed. The delegations of the Twelve saw no need to wait for the report from the Kiev meeting. They wished to reiterate that they would oppose the approval of a new Secretariat post in the budget under that item and would

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(Mr. Barnett, United Kingdom)

submit a draft resolution for an in-depth study of the activities undertaken in that area. They recalled that several organizations were involved in studying the effects of the disaster and maintained that the United Nations should concentrate its efforts in those areas where it had a comparative advantage.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
5th meeting
held on
6 October 1992
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLÓN	(Uruguay)
later:	Miss DIOP (Vice-Chairman)	(Senegal)
later:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLÓN (Chairman)	(Uruguay)
later:	Mr. GUERRERO (Vice-Chairman)	(Philippines)

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12 October 1992

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. LAWSON (Togo) said that, while the political, institutional and economic restructuring taking place in Eastern Europe should be welcomed, that process had largely contributed to a slump in the volume of world trade and a reduction in the world production of goods and services in 1991. The upheaval in Eastern Europe threatened to divert financial flows from the developing countries and to marginalize certain regions of the world. It was still not clear whether the end of the cold war would pose new obstacles to the North-South dialogue or would be a means of stimulating it.

2. The economic situation in Africa continued to be a cause for concern. Between 1960 and 1989, Africa's share in the world gross national product (GNP) had declined from 1.9 per cent to 1.2 per cent, and its share in world trade had fallen from 3.8 per cent to 1 per cent. Moreover, between 1986 and 1990, depressed commodity prices had cost the continent more than $US 50 billion. Africa's long-term prospects were just as bleak.

3. Efforts to establish a new world order should be based on the strengthening of international economic cooperation. All regions, including Africa, must be fully integrated into the world economy. Urgent measures should be taken to cancel or alleviate a substantial part of public and private debt, particularly the debt of the least developed countries (LDCs) and to seek durable solutions that both strengthened the capacity to repay and enhanced economic growth. It would also be desirable to convene, as soon as possible, an international conference on the financing of development.

4. The stagnation or decline in commodity prices continued to deprive the developing countries of the financial resources necessary for planning and financing development. A successful outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations was therefore essential. The negotiations should be conducted in a spirit of fairness, solidarity and cooperation in order to facilitate the adoption of measures for ensuring the progressive elimination of protectionism and the creation of a more open, free and non-discriminatory international market.

5. The restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social field, as well as the strengthening of international economic cooperation, should be based on respect for the principle of the sovereign equality of States, the prerogatives of the General Assembly, the promotion of political and economic dialogue and the enhancement of the Organization's efficiency, especially in the light of its broadened activities and increased volume of work. His delegation could not support the proposal to eliminate the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly, which were important forums for political consultation and guidance in the economic and social field.

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(Mr. Lawson, Togo)

6. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had laid solid foundations for a more integrated and dynamic approach to development. In implementing the decisions of the Conference, particular attention should be given to the mobilization of the financial resources needed to achieve the objectives of Agenda 21 and to establish the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for an international convention on desertification and the Commission on Sustainable Development.

7. In the light of the relative lack of progress in the North-South dialogue and the emergence of a unipolar world dominated by the North, South-South cooperation among developing countries was essential, and could be used to strengthen their negotiating power. Bolder action should be taken to achieve the objective of the collective autonomy of the developing countries, particularly in the priority areas identified in the report of the South Commission. South-South cooperation should be intensified through the use of all existing financing mechanisms, the progressive elimination of economic disparities among developing countries and projects that promoted regional and subregional economic integration.

8. The increasing number of LDCs was a negation of the principle of international solidarity and one of the most blatant failures of international economic cooperation. The implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s should improve the economic situation of those countries and prepare the way for their integration into the circle of prosperous nations.

9. The social dimension of development was an undeniable reality and public participation in national decision-making and management was an effective way of ensuring harmonious development as well as the rational use of human resources. That new reality implied a dynamic interrelationship between development, respect for human rights and the establishment of democratic institutions.

10. Under the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, Africa had taken vigorous steps to promote regional and subregional cooperation and economic integration, intensify the process of democratization, strengthen respect for human rights and implement policies and strategies in the agricultural and rural development sectors designed to ensure the full integration of the rural economy into the national economy and to achieve food security and strengthen food self-sufficiency. In the light of the failure to achieve the objectives of the Programme of Action, the international community should provide Africa with the necessary assistance and support and should renew its commitments to the Programme.

11. Mr. OSVALD (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that, in its promotion of political, economic, social and environmental progress and stability, the United Nations was unique among international institutions. As part of the process of improving the Organization's

(Mr. Osvald, Sweden)

effectiveness and impact in the economic, social and related fields, it was necessary to establish clearer policy guidance and better coordination in the field, more distinct divisions of responsibilities, and arrangements that were better suited to governing the operational arm of the United Nations in those fields, especially in the light of growing needs and the increasing strain on available resources.

12. The Conference on Environment and Development had demonstrated the resolve of the international community to tackle urgent, complex and interdependent issues. The follow-up of Agenda 21 and other vital decisions of the Conference should prove that joint action within the United Nations could respond to the major challenges to the world's future. The General Assembly at its current session had the important responsibility of launching the follow-up to the Conference in a constructive and efficient way.

13. By restructuring and devising more flexible machinery, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) could play a more effective role as an analyst and consensus-builder. As part of the process of revitalizing the United Nations in the economic and social field, consideration must be given to how to avoid duplicating the work done by UNCTAD, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

14. Preparations for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development were currently under way. The time remaining before the Conference must be used as constructively as possible, with particular emphasis on popular participation and a close dialogue between national leaders and their constituencies. Such processes would in themselves be an important contribution to the national reports. In addition, commitment at a high political level was vital. Population questions were, above all, a dimension of development and should be treated accordingly. Such questions highlighted the role of women and their educational, social and economic advancement. The strong links between environment and population, as well as the ethical issue of reproductive choice, should be discussed at the Conference. It was also of utmost importance that resources should be made available to the United Nations system for the planning of the Conference.

15. In its resolution 46/182, the General Assembly agreed on important principles and guidelines for enhancing the response of the United Nations system to complex emergencies. The Assembly at its current session must continue to strengthen the Organization's capacity in that field, particularly in the light of the emergencies that had occurred in 1992.

16. External assistance, reform and restructuring of international cooperation were not sufficient guarantees for development. Appeals for international solidarity and a more equitable distribution of global wealth could be credible only if they were based on sound national policies. All Governments were responsible for all their citizens and their well-being, as well as for the economic development of their countries.

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(Mr. Osvald, Sweden)

17. There was a growing consensus regarding the political and economic importance of investments in human resources and the interrelationship between economic growth and human development. People were both the goal and the vehicle of development. In that context, the Nordic countries underscored the crucial but often neglected role of women.

18. Strategies for growth would not be viable unless they were combined with explicit attention to social inequalities. The alleviation of poverty, strong environment and population policies and attention to basic human needs went hand in hand with overall good governance. Democracy, respect for human rights, transparency and accountability, as well as responsible Governments, were essential for ensuring more just and equitable societies. In many developing countries, grass-roots organizations contributed to the growth of pluralism and democracy. The dedicated and long-term work of non-governmental organizations were particularly important in that regard.

19. For many developing countries, foreign aid represented the most important source of external finance. Aid flows should therefore be increased and should concentrate on the poorest nations. The Nordic countries as a group had achieved, and some of them had considerably surpassed, the 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) target for official development assistance (ODA). They welcomed the commitments made by some major donors at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to reach the 0.7 per cent target by the year 2000.

20. Developing countries lost a substantial amount of export income because of obstacles to trade in the international markets. The further opening of markets for exports from developing countries would go a long way to making desperately needed resources available for development, at least in middle-income countries. In that regard, a rapid and successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round was of the utmost importance.

21. Another major impediment to development was the debt burden. According to the latest available figures, developing countries as a group owed the developed countries, commercial banks and multilateral funding institutions a total of $US 1,300 billion. The Nordic countries had long urged the members of the Paris Club to contribute actively to a prompt agreement on additional debt relief for the poorest countries, and would welcome, on a case-by-case basis, relief of up to 80 per cent for the most affected poorest countries committed to adjustment and structural reforms.

22. Mr. ACHARYA (Nepal) said that the beginning of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade had not been auspicious. In the first years of the current decade, world output had fallen by over 2 per cent, and there had been a real decline in per capita income in developing countries. Slow growth in the industrial countries, the virtual stagnation of the United States economy, the difficult economic transition of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the newly

(Mr. Acharya, Nepal)

independent States of the former Soviet Union, and the sluggish pace of growth in developing countries indicated that all was not well in the global economy.

23. The recession in the developed countries had a direct bearing on the least developed countries. The growth of the latter's GDP, about 2.5 per cent during 1990-1991, had led to a decline in per capita growth rates in many LDCs. While some LDCs were seriously affected by the considerably reduced flows of private remittances from nationals previously employed in the Gulf region, others had been affected by the disruption of international tourism during 1990-1991. They had also been adversely affected by unfavourable world commodity prices. Furthermore, several of such countries had been stricken by natural disasters that had caused heavy losses of human life and extensive damage to their infrastructures and agriculture. The situation had been further exacerbated by massive flows of refugees, resulting in extreme hardship to the local population, destabilization of the local ecology and rapid depletion of vegetation.

24. The world economy must be fully and effectively integrated. The international community's efforts to provide a supportive external environment for the domestic policies of the countries of Eastern Europe represented a positive development in that regard. The new specialized bank for long-term lending, debt rescheduling and debt forgiveness, improved market access, foreign direct investment and the transfer of technology were vital elements of the support thus provided. That was exactly the kind of support the developing countries had been seeking in their efforts to revitalize their economies.

25. The process of negative transfer of financial resources from the developing countries to the developed world had an adverse effect on the former's economic growth. The debt problem required a comprehensive solution, not only to relieve the burden of past borrowing but also to avoid problems in future borrowing. As one means of providing capital for the developing countries, the developed countries should fulfil the target for ODA that had been agreed 20 years earlier. Foreign direct investment was another useful source of capital. Multilateral institutions, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other regional development banks, would remain the developing countries' most important source of financing, and must thus be further strengthened and depoliticized.

26. The rise of protectionist measures in the developed countries at a time when the majority of developing countries were engaged in a process of trade liberalization was a great setback to the current international trade regime, and a successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round was thus essential.

27. In the context of restructuring the United Nations in order to enhance international cooperation for development, the role of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should be further strengthened. There was an acute need to improve the relationship between the United Nations and the

(Mr. Acharya, Nepal)

specialized agencies, particularly international financial and trade institutions as well as the Organization's operational activities for development. In spite of various policies, programmes and initiatives, development activities in developing countries lacked adequate financing, and it was therefore of utmost importance to convene an international conference on the financing of development.

28. Sustainable economic development required corresponding environmental management and social and human development. Despite the lack of commitments, the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit constituted a first step in that direction, and he hoped that Agenda 21 and the Conventions on Climate Change and Biological Diversity would be implemented and the High-level Commission on Sustainable Development established. Social, political and economic development must be centred on human beings, and would be furthered by the forthcoming Conferences on Human Rights (1993), Population (1994) and Social Development (1995). Particular efforts were being made in Nepal's current five-year plan to integrate social, human and environmental concerns, with special emphasis being placed on rural development.

29. For the past two and a half years Nepal had embarked on a broad programme of democratic reforms, including the adoption of a new Constitution and the democratic election of the central Government and local bodies. It needed support for the economic and social development objectives of its eighth five-year plan in order to strengthen that democratic process.

30. Miss Diop, Senegal, Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

31. Mr. GHERMAN (Republic of Moldova) said that one year after independence, the Republic of Moldova was endeavouring to join in European construction and integrate itself into the world community. Most conflicts in the post-communist States were of political rather than ethnic origin. Unfortunately, strong economic pressures were being used to thwart the aspirations of the Republic of Moldova, which in its transition to a market system suffered from the lack of an efficient economic mechanism, structural deformations in its economy, a critical situation in its technological and material production base and a lack of investment. Its economy was highly dependent on the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) for markets, raw materials and energy, the most important partner being the Russian Federation. That fact had led to steep price rises, unreliable delivery of raw materials and energy, and the use of such dislocation as an instrument of political pressure. His country was keen to rationalize its economic links with the CIS countries, while at the same time integrating into the world economy.

32. The Republic of Moldova had suffered from an unprecedented drought, which had caused losses in agricultural production amounting to 6 billion roubles. Funds were therefore urgently needed from foreign sources for a special agricultural support programme. The total losses to the Moldovan economy as a

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(Mr. Gherman, Republic of Moldova)

result of Russian pro-imperial, militarist interference were in excess of 12 billion. Health care and welfare continued to decline as unemployment rose. To overcome the difficult economic situation, the Government had planned to privatize 40-45 per cent of State property during 1993-1994, and the credit and tax systems would be reformed. Support would be given to an array of free market mechanisms in order to stimulate the economy and integrate it into the world economy on a sound legal and institutional basis. A number of international trade agreements had been signed with most-favoured-nation clauses. The Republic of Moldova hoped that the United Nations and its agencies would provide help, especially with training, consultancy, development policy and finance.

33. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) welcomed the States which had recently joined the United Nations, paid homage to the victims of genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina and expressed full support for the statement made by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77, as well as that made by the representative of Mauritania on behalf of the Arab Maghreb Union.

34. Recent developments in international politics, the end of the cold war and the reinforcement of democracy provided an historic opportunity for arms reduction and resolution of recent conflicts. Efforts must be concentrated on correcting underdevelopment, one of the root causes of instability. It was inadmissible that 15 per cent of the world population should control 80 per cent of the world's wealth, while 1.5 billion people lived in absolute poverty. Paradoxically just as the developing countries were liberalizing their trade under structural adjustment programmes, the developed countries were increasing protectionism, at a cost to the developing countries of 10 times the value of ODA. The principles laid down by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) applied to only 7 per cent of international trade. It was therefore of the utmost importance to arrive at a positive and equitable conclusion to the Uruguay Round negotiations, and he appealed to the developed countries to resolve their differences in order to achieve an open and transparent world market.

35. Debt reduction for developing countries had been offset by new loans, leaving external debt at the same unacceptably high levels. He welcomed the recent improvement in the Toronto conditions for the poorest countries, which, however, did not go as far as the Trinidad proposals. The debt strategy in favor of middle-income developing countries had afforded some debt relief, but it needed to be better linked with new public and private financing and foreign investment in those countries. External debt siphoned off $50 billion annually from the developing countries, which were subject to real interest rates up to four times higher than those paid by developed countries.

36. In view of investment needs in Eastern Europe and the Gulf region, credit was expected to remain expensive. Direct foreign investment was heavily skewed towards the industrial countries, to the detriment of the deficit-laden developing countries. He therefore urged the convening of an international conference on development financing.

(Mr. Amaziane, Morocco)

37. In view of the grave current world recession, the industrial countries should apply the same adjustment discipline to themselves as they demanded from the developing countries. IMF should monitor the macroeconomic policies of the main industrial countries more closely in order for the monetary system to function more smoothly and adjustment costs to be shared more equitably. Coordination of macroeconomic policy should be expanded to include representatives of the South and East, in accordance with their importance in the world economy.

38. ODA, at $51 billion, was inadequate to the enormous development needs of the developing world, and represented only 0.35 per cent of the GNP of OECD member countries, half of the objective set in 1975. Furthermore, politically neutral multilateral assistance had declined in favour of bilateral assistance and its attendant conditionality. Only a quarter of multilateral technical assistance expenditure actually reached the developing countries, the rest being swallowed up by administrative and other expenses. Far too small a proportion of ODA went to human development problems such as health, drinking water, family planning and nutrition. ODA was therefore in need of far-reaching reform, and additional resources were necessary, which could be obtained by reducing military expenditure and protectionist subsidies. Conditions for the transfer of technology should be made more flexible, especially since serious environmental protection efforts could only be made given free access to ecological technologies on concessional and preferential terms.

39. Over the past decade, the African continent had become increasingly marginalized as a result of population growth, external debt, the fall in basic commodity prices, the degradation of the environment, drought and civil wars. The 1986 special session of the General Assembly on the critical situation in Africa had not led to adequate support for African economies. He called upon the developed countries to establish an ambitious programme of economic reconstruction for Africa, such as that being implemented in Central and Eastern Europe. The New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s contained in General Assembly resolution 46/151 should be a catalyst for such cooperation activities. Morocco devoted 95 per cent of its modest international cooperation budget to African countries. He reiterated his delegation's support for the establishment of an African diversification fund in order to make African exports less dependent on a small number of basic commodities.

40. On the eve of the third millennium, the United Nations was more then ever in demand to deal with international security, humanitarian assistance, the environment and development. However, its financial base had not expanded as rapidly as its activities. The Organization risked becoming a victim of its own popularity if it failed to secure the full financial support of its Members.

41. Mr. Piriz-Ballón, Uruguay, resumed the Chair.

42. Mrs. TALLAWY (Egypt) said that despite the emerging new world order, the world economic situation remained critical, particularly in Africa, which contained 32 of the least developed countries. One country in Eastern Europe had received $24 billion in aid; while Africa did not oppose the provision of assistance to Eastern Europe, it resented not receiving its fair share. Total production and income in the world had fallen for the first time since the Second World War. The external economic environment for development had deteriorated to the detriment of the developing countries, which laboured under the burden of excessive external debt, a severe contraction in development financing, historically low commodity prices and escalating protectionism, all of which constituted threats to international peace and security. Political progress and economic development were inseparable, and the international community must take concrete measures to address the root causes of underdevelopment. The international economic system should be restructured jointly by the developing and the developed countries, while respecting fully the right of all countries to choose their national priorities independently and to participate in the international economic decision-making process. The unprecedented magnitude of economic and social problems made it a matter of urgency to translate the declaration adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly into action. The North-South dialogue should be strengthened and pursued in a constructive, non-confrontational manner. A free, open and non-discriminatory trading system could provide an effective and viable basis for the promotion of equitable development and economic prosperity in all countries. It was important to prevent protectionist pressures from undermining the negotiating efforts of the Uruguay Round.

43. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had reshaped the notion of development. The Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, the Declaration on Forests, and the Conventions on the Climate Change and Biological Diversity were important landmarks on the road to sustainable development, which required that due attention be paid not only to environmental, but also to economic and social aspects. An environmentally sound planet was incompatible with a socially unjust world. She hoped that the "spirit of Rio" would continue to prevail as ways and means of implementing the conclusions of the Conference were discussed. Her delegation attached great importance to the Commission on Sustainable Development. Such development would require new and additional resources and the availability of technology to developing countries. Her delegation welcomed in particular the establishment of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification, in particular in Africa. The Conference on Population and Development to be convened at Cairo in 1994 would be of great importance. Poverty, the environment and population could no longer be dealt with separately. Careful consideration should be given to the possibility of adjusting the timing and duration of the Second and Third Preparatory Committees to ensure adequate intergovernmental preparation for the Conference. It was also important to secure contributions to the Voluntary Trust Funds and to ensure the full participation of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries in the preparatory phase.

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(Mrs. Tallawy, Egypt)

44. There was an increasing recognition that efforts must be made to enhance the capacity and the effectiveness of the United Nations system as an instrument of international cooperation for development, and the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields had acquired special significance in that context. Several proposals for institutional reforms put forward during the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council the previous June merited fuller consideration. First, her delegation welcomed any proposal conducive to democratizing the structure and maintaining the principle of "one country, one vote". General Assembly resolution 45/264 remained the basis for further action in that area. Secondly, the General Assembly should remain the supreme political body for consideration of development issues, with the role of the Economic and Social Council confined to coordination and to policy issues in development problems. Thirdly, the analytical and research capabilities of the United Nations should be strengthened, with concrete measures to that end including a new recruitment policy.

45. There was also an urgent need to establish a closer link, promote collaboration between the multilateral financial institutions, the United Nations, its programmes, and other specialized agencies. The expertise of the United Nations in socio-economic areas could have greater impact on the design and implementation of IMF and World Bank-supported adjustment and restructuring programmes, while the lending policies of the Bretton Woods institutions could reinforce United Nations efforts in the economic and social areas.

46. Mr. ZIARAN (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, with world output growing by only 0.7 per cent in 1992, following the first global contraction in output in the post-war era in 1991, the world economic situation was not promising, and had hampered the recovery of developing country economies, as well as resulting in many uncertainties about future trends. To make matters worse, no real attempt had been made to rectify the problems of the international economy or to make it more responsive to the needs of all nations, and the gap between rich and poor nations had actually widened. Developing countries were thus more than ever in need of an increased flow of financial resources and transfer of technology. New initiatives must be launched to facilitate access by the developing countries to the financial resources of the Bretton Woods institutions.

47. Another area of concern was the high long-term level of real interest rates, combined with uncertainties regarding future trends in those rates, which placed numerous constraints on investment and growth in developing countries, especially those of the Gulf region that were striving to reconstruct economies devastated by two wars.

48. A third matter for concern was the unjust distribution of existing resources at the international level. Allocation of financial aid packages for sustainable development activities was often blatantly influenced by

(Mr. Ziaran, Islamic Republic of Iran)

political considerations. There was thus an urgent need for a revision of such approaches.

49. On a more positive note, the relaxation of East-West tensions meant that resources could now be diverted from military to civilian use, facilitating the provision of financial resources by the Bretton Woods institutions to support development activities. That model, once merely wishful thinking, could become a reality if advanced nations, particularly those that had been involved in the arms race, gave serious consideration to the long-term benefits of such a reallocation of resources.

50. Global markets played a crucial role in the process of development and economic growth. Currently, however, developing countries were often denied the opportunity to compete on an equal footing in areas such as labour-intensive manufacturing, where they had a comparative advantage. Major reforms were needed in world markets to bring about a more efficient and open system, reflecting the opening up of national markets and providing equal opportunities for all.

51. Unfortunately, any suggestion that the international environment was at least partially responsible for the third world's problems was rejected by proponents of the view that the real causes of poverty, economic stagnation, unemployment and developing countries' low share in world trade lay in those countries' national policies. The experience of developing countries that had experimented extensively with laissez-faire policies showed that the problems in fact stemmed not from assigning too prominent a role to the public sector, for example, but from the prevailing international economic environment. No one, of course, was suggesting that the international community could miraculously offset genuine shortcomings at national level. Nevertheless, a propitious world environment could clearly complement and boost national efforts by the developing nations to overcome their problems.

52. Turning to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, he stressed that the General Assembly had a significant role to play in overseeing the fulfilment of the commitments entered into at Rio de Janeiro, in its capacity as the supreme decision-making body with regard not only to the implementation of Agenda 21, but also to its possible revision. However, the General Assembly could not work miracles: implementation of Agenda 21 depended to a great extent on the political will and commitment of all nations, particularly the developed countries. His delegation attached great importance to the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development and to the drafting of an international convention on desertification. Membership of the Commission should reflect the recent emergence of new States into the political arena. A revision of the system for allocation of seats to regional groups would thus be required.

53. Developing countries attempting to revive their economies after the stagnation of the 1980s now faced competition for financial resources from the

economies of Eastern Europe undergoing transition, and also from nations seeking to rebuild their economies after decades of conflict and civil war. The time was thus ripe to embark on preparations for an international conference on development financing. His delegation hoped that, mindful of the urgency of the issue, the negotiating parties would be able to agree during the current session on a preliminary framework for such a conference.

54. The triennial review of operational activities provided an important opportunity to review ways and means of promoting the efficiency of the United Nations system in that field. Initiatives should be taken with a view to increasing substantially the resources available for such activities, on an assured and stable basis.

55. Recent changes on the world scene, and the challenges they brought with them, had increased the need for international cooperation and accommodation. What was needed to reverse the current international economic situation was not new legislation or new mechanisms, but political will and firm commitment on the part of all nations to work towards a juster and more propitious global environment. Meanwhile, the commitments and guidelines embodied in the Declaration adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly and contained in the annex to resolution S-18/3 of 1 May 1990, the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the Cartagena Commitment of the eighth session of UNCTAD and Agenda 21 remained to be implemented.

56. Mr. RAKOTONAIVO (Madagascar) fully endorsed the views expressed by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 regarding the major economic problems facing the world. In spite of pressing calls, the new spirit of cooperation that had characterized international political relations since the end of the cold war had not been accompanied by comparable trends in the sphere of international development cooperation. The world economic situation continued to be a matter for concern, with growth and development of third world countries at a standstill, increasing inequality and instability, and the impact of the development crisis threatening seriously to jeopardize the structural, political and economic reforms under way.

57. Nowhere had that economic situation had more devastating effects than in Africa. The elimination of poverty and participation by the entire population, including vulnerable groups such as women, young people and children, were key factors in development strategies and reform programmes in that continent. Those questions lay at the heart of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development in Africa in the 1990s, the implementation of which, in a framework of true partnership, was now a matter of extreme urgency. Conscious of its prime responsibility in that sphere, Africa intended to embark on that new form of cooperation on a basis, not of dependence or charity, but of the concepts of dignity and mutual advantage.

(Mr. Rakotonaivo, Madagascar)

58. Poverty could be eliminated only if economic growth was accelerated and sustained and radical solutions were found to the deep-rooted economic, political and social causes of underdevelopment. In that context, the problem of the developing countries' external debt merited particular attention, in view of its political dimension. The measures taken thus far must be strengthened and broadened so as to take account of growth objectives. The crucial need to relaunch growth and development called for the mobilization of adequate additional resources to respond to new factors and events, such as support for the democratic process, assistance to countries undergoing transition, measures to deal with the economic and humanitarian problems of countries devastated by conflicts, and application of the concept of people-oriented sustainable development with due regard to environmental imperatives. In that regard, his delegation stressed the need to achieve the ODA target of 0.7 per cent of GNP set more than 20 years previously, to increase in real terms the resources available under the tenth replenishment of International Development Association, and to increase the financial base of the World Bank and the regional development banks.

59. There was also an urgent need to convene an international conference on the financing of development. The General Assembly must define the agenda and objectives of such a conference during its current session. It was to be hoped that specific measures could also be recommended to ensure a just allocation of the peace dividend, resources which had hitherto been squandered or devoted to measures to integrate the economies of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

60. With regard to international trade, his delegation considered it of paramount importance to find solutions to the continuing problems of low commodity price levels and the further deterioration in the terms of trade, and to achieve a satisfactory outcome to the Uruguay Round.

61. At its current session, the Committee would be debating the question of strengthening the international mechanism for cooperation concerning operational activities for development. The debate devoted to that subject at the most recent session of the Economic and Social Council could serve as a useful basis for the Committee's own deliberations. With regard to the conceptual framework for the reforms envisaged in that sphere, his delegation continued to advocate respect for the rules and principles of neutrality, non-conditionality, universality, contributions to activities on a voluntary basis, freedom and responsibility of beneficiary countries in establishing their objectives and priorities, and preservation of the democratic nature of decision-taking mechanisms.

62. As a signatory of the three important instruments submitted to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Madagascar attached the utmost importance to the implementation of Agenda 21. The creation of the Commission on Sustainable Development would be crucial to monitoring execution of the commitments set forth in that document. His delegation was convinced

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(Mr. Rakotonaivo, Madagascar)

that, without the necessary financial resources and the establishment of institutional arrangements and appropriate transfer of technology, the final documents of the Conference would remain a dead letter.

63. Peace, security and development were clearly indissociable, as could be seen from the many examples throughout the world of economic distress accompanied by social disturbances. Madagascar thus welcomed the increased interest accorded by the United Nations to world economic problems. The central topic of debate was thus the strengthening of international cooperation for development. His delegation hoped that, at the current session, consensus would be reached on the various components of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations system currently under way. The proposals by the Group of 77 were based on a global concept of security and the principles of justice, equity and equal participation. Only by adhering to those principles would it be possible to achieve the goals sought by all, and in particular, the elimination of poverty.

64. Mr. MAIER (Deputy Director-General, International Labour Organisation) said that during the 1980s social policy and social justice had systematically been regarded as an antiquated concept and a misguided aim, respectively. Yet ideologues had failed to produce evidence that the alternatives - simplistic recipes such as "the invisible hand of the market" - could bring divergent interests into harmony so as to secure the aims set forth in Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations. The trend towards restoring social issues to the agenda for development cooperation had begun when the 1989 edition of the World Economic Survey had reported the emergence of a new consensus on the need to see people as the principal resource and potential of a country and not as a burden; and had continued with the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. Against that background, statistics indicating that world per capita output had declined by over 2 per cent in 1991 hardly augured well for the fulfilment of the objectives of the Strategy. It was thus not surprising that a concerted global effort to invigorate growth and development on a sustained and sustainable basis had been identified as the first priority during the high-level segment of the most recent session of the Economic and Social Council, which had also expressed the fear that international development cooperation and the eradication of poverty were inextricably linked with the preservation of peace and security.

65. Recent decades had witnessed several stages in the process of globalization of the world economy. Following the creation of electronically linked global markets, the world was now in the process of creating truly integrated markets for traded goods and services, with the gradual emergence of regional economic blocs and painstaking efforts to abolish global impediments to trade. In that process, labour markets and social conditions had hitherto remained largely controlled by national laws and regulations. A third stage of globalization was now approaching, in which labour markets would - or should - become integrated and internationalized.

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(Mr. Maier, ILO)

66. ILO had always insisted on the need to bring a social dimension into the process of economic reform and integration, thereby avoiding social distortions and making the process acceptable to the population as a whole. Any negative social consequences of the process of building a global economy must be taken into account, and mechanisms put in place to deal with them at local level. The quality of the work force and the social conditions of production would henceforth be increasingly important determinants of competitiveness and prosperity. International labour standards had a key role to play in that process and ILO's task was to help countries achieve economic development consistent with the ideals of social justice and respect for human dignity.

67. Links between the economic and social aspects of development were particularly important to bear in mind in the context of discussions on adjustment. Adjustment efforts would not succeed if they were dominated by purely economic considerations. Unemployment and social deprivation must not be regarded as the inevitable price of adjustment; nor could a healthy balance of payments and a stable currency be bought at the expense of increased hunger, malnutrition and unemployment. The challenge was to ensure that the adjustment process should be socially and politically acceptable and just. In other words, the conditionality linked with international financial assistance must be complemented by a firm national and international commitment to policies of social protection and advancement as outlined in ILO's basic labour standards.

68. The validity of social policy was increasingly being endorsed by international financial institutions, and the renewed emphasis on that subject was also reflected in the widespread support for the convening of a social summit. The ILO was strongly committed to securing agreement on key selected actions centred on the alleviation and reduction of poverty and the promotion of policies that enhanced employment opportunities, improved human resources and fostered social cohesion.

69. Recent financial turmoils had once more underlined the urgent need for coherent and consistent regional global policies and mechanisms to govern international economic and financial relations. The industrialized world and the international community as a whole remained committed to assisting developing countries in their efforts for structural and social improvement, and all Governments and international institutions were determined to combat unacceptably high levels of unemployment. However, prevailing conditions did not permit equitable development and high levels of employment, and neither in the developing nor in the industrialized countries were the prospects of achieving high rates of job creation very bright, and in the latter, in particular, the problem was one of insufficient quality, as well as insufficient quantity, of jobs.

70. Any strategy aimed at developing efficient and equitable global labour markets and an optimal allocation of the global labour force must be based on

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(Mr. Maier, ILO)

the fact that competitiveness in itself was useless without sufficient demand for goods and services. Every effort must therefore be made to use the opportunities offered by open exchange in an increasingly internationalized trading system to generate demand and income by creating jobs in poverty-stricken areas.

71. Mr. Guerrero, Philippines, Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

72. Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh) said that while his country was encouraged by the increased interest in the use of collective security measures to maintain international peace and security and by the increased emphasis on development-related issues, it was also concerned about the prolonged stagnation in the world economy and the fact that the extremely difficult global economic environment marked, inter alia, by protectionism, insufficient capital flows, shrinking markets and restrictions on transfers of technology, continued to frustrate the brave efforts of developing countries to alleviate poverty, develop human resources and attain sustainable development.

73. Bangladesh strongly believed that the expansion of trade was an important means of reactivating growth and development in the developing countries, and was perturbed at the lack of progress being made in the Uruguay Round. Those negotiations should be concluded as rapidly as possible, with provision for special concessions to the least developed countries. His delegation attached great importance to the effective implementation of the Cartagena commitment, since it believed that a strengthened UNCTAD was of crucial importance to the economic prosperity of all countries. It also called on the developed countries to meet the internationally agreed ODA target of 0.7 per cent of GNP, and wished to underscore the need for increased foreign investment in the developing countries, in which transnational corporations could play a vital role.

74. It was to be hoped that the international community would be able to find a durable solution to the huge debt burden of the developing countries and the critical problem of servicing such debt, and his delegation supported the proposal on the establishment of an Advisory Committee on debt and development.

75. The current international monetary system required structural reform to enable it to address the demands of the present world situation. There was also a crucial need for additional international liquidity and development finance particularly for the developing countries. They would also benefit from more meaningful cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

76. Although world food production statistics had not been encouraging in recent years, Bangladesh had been able to achieve significant success in food production, and believed that national food strategies remained a very useful means of enhancing food production, self-reliance in food and better access to food for all.

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(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

77. His delegation attached great importance to the relationship between population, development and the environment, and felt that concerted efforts were required to check population growth in many developing countries. Accordingly, it welcomed the convening of the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994.

78. The responsibility for maintaining the momentum generated by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and for translating its objectives into reality must be shared by both the developed and developing countries, in order to safeguard the common future and survival of mankind. His delegation, therefore supported the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

79. With respect to the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, any reform measure should be based on the fundamental principles of sovereign equality, democracy and transparency.

80. On the triennial review of operational activities, his delegation fully agreed that a more coordinated approach was needed to operational activities at the country level. The question must be dealt with in a comprehensive manner, since such activities must be provided with adequate financial resources on a sustained and predictable basis.

81. Over the years, the situation of the least developed countries had worsened. The international community should meet its commitments under the Programme of Action for those countries for the 1990s, since without enhanced and concessional resource flows and increased market access, their development efforts would continue to be frustrated.

82. The capability of developing countries to respond to emergencies, including natural and man-made disasters, must be enhanced and in that respect the establishment of the Office of the Humanitarian Emergency Relief Coordinator was a welcome step in efforts to deal with such emergencies.

83. In conclusion, he urged the adoption of a global development agenda spelling out a new course of action to reactivate economic growth and development. As mankind's future was tied together, collective efforts based on mutual trust and support were imperative.

84. Mr. TRINH XUAN LANG (Viet Nam) said that it was disappointing to note that for the first time since the Second World War, global production and income had actually fell in 1991 and recovery was likely to be unusually weak. With a few exceptions, most developing countries currently faced bleaker prospects for revitalized growth and development as their painful adjustments had been making little headway, largely because of the adverse international economic environment.

85. The fact that the developing countries' reform efforts aimed at fostering growth and development continued to be frustrated by the persistent inequities in international economic relations was a disgrace to the concept of global partnership and to the recognition of the realities of interdependence in the modern world. In that connection, it should be re-emphasized that creating an international economic environment conducive to the endeavours of developing countries was mainly the responsibility, both moral and practical, of the industrialized countries. Priority should be given to such urgent issues as increasing financial resource flows to the developing countries, lifting discriminatory restrictions and barriers against developing countries' exports to the markets of industrialized countries and removing obstacles to the transfer of technologies needed for environmentally sustainable development programmes in the developing countries.

86. His delegation shared the view that with the dramatic and profound changes in the political and economic scene over the past few years, the United Nations now had an unprecedented opportunity to discharge effectively the role assigned to it by the Charter in the vital area of economic and social development. It was indeed high time for the United Nations system to address seriously the all-important challenge of meeting the targets and objectives already agreed upon in various consensus resolutions and commitments. It was in that context that the question of restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations system in the economic, social and related fields should be actively pursued.

87. But it was not only the United Nations system that needed reforms and restructuring. His country had initiated, since 1987, policies and measures of economic reform and all-round renewal. One of the most important initial achievements had been attained in the agricultural sector where Viet Nam had moved from being a chronic importer of rice to an exporter for the fourth consecutive year in 1992. The boosting of trade and exports had been another notable achievement and in that connection, his country assigned top priority to expanding relations of cooperation and broadening trade with all countries and economic organizations. It therefore welcomed the fact that the dynamic growth of cooperation for development and prosperity in South-East Asia, as well as in the larger region of Asia and the Pacific, had gained momentum during 1991.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
6th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 7 October 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 6th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON	(Uruguay)
later:	Mr. GUERRERO (Vice-Chairman)	(Philippines)
later:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Chairman)	(Uruguay)

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GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

1. Mr. SHAKIR (Iraq) said that the ending of the cold war had been accompanied by important political, economic and social changes but they had unfortunately worked mainly to the advantage of the developed countries and to the disadvantage of the developing ones, which yet hoped for an improvement in their economic situation and for the opening-up of better prospects. However, the economic crisis in the developed countries had grown worse, the gap between rich and poor countries had widened and the disparities had become more acute, owing in particular to the big fall in the prices of commodities and raw materials, which had led to considerable losses of resources by the developing countries, causing a deterioration in their economic situation and in the living standards of their peoples. Accordingly, the United Nations had a duty to help them to rebuild their economic structures so that they could continue their development.

2. Against that background the problem of the foreign debt and its service was one of the most serious facing the developing countries: it was a heavy burden which hampered their efforts to implement their development plans. The developed countries and the international institutions must therefore examine the problem seriously with a view to solving it and must take measures to help the developing countries, in particular by cutting interest rates. It was also necessary to develop cooperation amongst the countries of the South themselves so that they could achieve self-sufficiency. For only self-sufficiency would enable them then to engage in genuine cooperation with the countries of the North.

3. Under the pretext of implementation of Security Council resolution 678 (1990) acts of aggression of terrible violence had been inflicted on Iraq, with destruction of its economic infrastructure and slaughter of its civilian population. The situation was unprecedented both legally and in terms of the magnitude of the material damage and the loss of human lives. Moreover, the country was still under economic siege, although the Government had agreed to carry out the Security Council resolutions and had cooperated actively with the inspection teams sent to Iraq. No action had been taken to lift the inhuman siege despite the desire for peace demonstrated by Iraq. It was an example of manifest exploitation of the suffering of a people facing serious shortages of foodstuffs and medicines. It might be noted in that context that the infant morbidity rate had doubled in two years.

4. His delegation requested the Committee, as an economic organ, to take cognizance of the effects of the economic blockade and the serious threats hanging over the civilian population, mainly the women, children and old people, especially with regard to the increased incidence of disease and the very sharp price rises resulting from the food shortages; it hoped that the Committee would make a vigorous effort to have the economic embargo against Iraq lifted.

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5. Mrs. ESCALER (Philippines) said that for decades the international community had equated security and peace with the absence of war but it had gradually realized that world security also depended on the economic and social situation of peoples. At present roughly two thirds of the world's population continued to live in poverty. In many regions unemployment was endemic, and the peasants had no land to till, owing largely to drought. Poverty was a problem which must be tackled with the same vigour as problems of a political nature.

6. As the Rio Declaration explicitly stated, all men and all nations had a right to development. To that end it was imperative for the international community to cooperate actively in a number of areas essential to the achievement of that development; one particular example was the eradication of poverty and relief of debt, the service of which ate up a huge percentage of the annual budget in many countries, including the Philippines, and which required the adoption of more innovative measures. Access to the markets of the developed countries, i.e. the removal of protectionist barriers to the exports of the developing countries, was also of capital importance. It was to be hoped in that connection that the negotiations of the Uruguay round would finally be brought to successful conclusion and would contribute to the establishment of a more open and equitable system. Other important areas in which international cooperation should be developed were direct foreign investment which added to capital formation, the introduction of new technologies in the developing countries which needed them, job creation and the development of export potential. It must be pointed out that the developed countries tended to invest in other developed countries. Furthermore, the transfer of technology was essential to profitability, competitiveness and economic progress. Only the utilization and experience of older technologies could develop the capacity of nations to absorb and use new ones. Like other developing countries, the Philippines therefore sought an acceleration of the transfer of environmentally sound technology on preferential terms. Economic and technical cooperation among the developing countries themselves must also be encouraged, but the developed countries and the international institutions should provide adequate financial support for that purpose.

7. As far as environmental protection was concerned, the Philippines was ready to cooperate with other countries in order to protect the planet's natural heritage but it insisted, like many other developing States, that human development must remain the priority.

8. The Philippines noted with appreciation the current efforts to revitalize and restructure the United Nations. The concrete steps already taken in the economic and social sectors needed to be augmented in order to make the activities of the various intergovernmental bodies and of the development-oriented funds, programmes and agencies more relevant, harmonized and coordinated and therefore more effective. The key aspects of revitalization and restructuring were universality, credibility, action-orientation and, above all, consistency with the democratic character

(Mrs. Escaler, Philippines)

of the United Nations and the basic principles of its Charter. The Philippines committed itself to active participation in the current efforts, which must be pursued in an integrated manner. It also noted with pleasure that the open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group of the Economic and Social Council on Enhancing International Cooperation for Development was to be continued during the current session, and it hoped that the group's work would help to strengthen the role of the United Nations in that field and therefore in the achievement of global peace.

9. Mr. KEITA (Guinea) said that while current economic and social conditions offered opportunities for reorganizing international economic relations on fairer terms, there could be no question that global economic trends were mostly negative, as shown by the slowdown of economic activity in the industrial countries, the weak growth of output in the developing countries and the collapse of the Eastern European economies.

10. Global inflation had abated somewhat, but the situation of developing countries was still a matter of concern, despite the efforts made by most of them, particularly in Africa, where the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development had not lived up to expectations. Guinea was no exception to the rule. It was faced with serious development problems, despite the Government's determined effort to direct social and economic organization towards a more open economy. It had taken measures to put public finance on a firm footing, and the reforms implemented had gone hand in hand with legislation aimed at strengthening the rule of law. The collapse of export prices, however, had caused a deterioration of the country's economic and financial position during 1991. Its GDP had grown by no more than 2.4 per cent, and the social situation still gave cause for concern because of widespread unemployment, particularly among young graduates. Nevertheless, the Government hoped to improve the situation in both areas by implementing large-scale projects designed to promote social and economic development that would benefit the more vulnerable strata.

11. International economic cooperation called for a new partnership inspired by the need to establish a more balanced world economy. That meant that the old antagonisms between States must be overcome and an atmosphere of cooperation must be fostered, which was in line with the new realities. Top priority should be given to improving structures, arrangements and systems that played a key role in economic relations, especially in the areas of trade, environment and finance. In that regard, Guinea endorsed the proposal to hold an international conference on the financing of development.

12. There was no doubt that in order to meet the challenges of development, the countries of the South must continue to revamp their economies with a view to restoring growth on solid foundations. The least developed countries, which were the most vulnerable, should receive priority assistance, and donors must show the political will to achieve the targets set for official development assistance. The international community could contribute to

(Mr. Keita, Guinea)

economic cooperation among developing countries by creating an interregional mechanism designed to support trade between developing countries. In the area of technical cooperation, it could help by promoting the utilization of national capabilities and the training of national cadres.

13. The Rio Conference had highlighted the synergism that existed between environmental and developmental issues; the recognition of that synergism should now be reflected in the provision of substantial amounts of aid to the poor countries to enable them to achieve sustainable development. That could be done by transferring technology and financial resources from the North to the South. In that regard, Guinea wished to stress the need to put in place institutional mechanisms to follow up on the Rio agreements, particularly the high-level Commission on Sustainable Development. His Government also attached great importance to the creation of the negotiating committee for the elaboration of an international convention to control desertification.

14. Poverty led to chaos and all kinds of ills; hence, the rich and the poor countries of the world must reach an understanding in order to ensure a peaceful future for the planet as a whole, based on a fundamental reform of North-South relations that would enable the developing countries to attain their fundamental development objectives by the year 2000. The international community must unite to define concerted programmes of action aimed inter alia at enhancing the human and technical resources of the developing countries. The process of restructuring the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system that was currently under way would no doubt be a decisive step forward towards the attainment of a new order based on the equitable sharing of economic and social development.

15. Mr. SUKAM (Malaysia) said that the continuing crisis of the global economy could lead to a major calamity. The growth of developing countries had been hampered by the recession in the developed countries, and it was incumbent upon the latter to seek effective solutions to their problems and to set their economies back on track.

16. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Development had referred to some bright spots among the developing countries in South and South-East Asia, but their share of global output was relatively small, and they were faced with increasingly restrictive markets. A case in point was that of tropical timber exports from the South, which were subjected to eco-labelling, whereas timber exports from the North were not, even though temperate timber output was much greater.

17. The developing countries were resolved to do whatever was necessary to resume economic growth, and they had already made heavy sacrifices with a view to achieving structural adjustment. Their efforts would be in vain, however, in the absence of emergency action to revamp the monetary system on the basis of multilaterally agreed principles.

(Mr. Sukam, Malaysia)

18. If the debt of the developing countries was to be reduced, there was an urgent need to raise commodity prices. In order for commodity-dependent countries to resume growth, it was essential not only to rationalize demand and stabilize prices, but also to create manufacturing industries that could contribute to diversification of the economy. The specialized agencies of the United Nations should assist in the development of the physical and other infrastructures needed to facilitate the process.

19. Protectionism had not been halted, and regional blocs had been set up which practised policies of exclusion. That situation could lead to retaliatory measures if the affected parties were not duly consulted and convinced. Malaysia would welcome any initiative aimed at pursuing consultations on the matter and on ways to compensate the countries that had been harmed. His Government also hoped that the Uruguay Round would soon be successfully concluded.

20. The consensus reached at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development must now be translated into practical action. North-South cooperation was central to the prevention of global environmental degradation and the achievement of sustained economic growth. The Commission on Sustainable Development must be established as soon as possible in order to monitor the implementation of the activities provided for under Agenda 21, including those related to technology transfer and financing. On the latter point, the failure by the developed countries to make their intentions clear was somewhat disappointing. Malaysia looked forward to participating in the negotiations to be held on that subject.

21. Finally, there was an urgent need to look into the problems arising from the pollution of international waterways and to review the existing international maritime law.

22. Mr. KRIKORIAN (Armenia) said that his country was at an important stage in its economic development. Faced with a multitude of problems, Armenia had chosen to trust to personal initiative and had been well rewarded. It had undertaken a land reform, liberalized prices and trade, enacted a law to privatize State-owned enterprises, encouraged the establishment of private firms, taken steps to provide social protection and worked towards the conversion of defence industry firms. The State budget was balanced and expenditure prioritized. Defence expenditures, in particular, had been kept to a minimum. Armenia considered the United Nations peace-keeping role to be critical, since peace was the guarantee of economic development.

23. International cooperation was crucial. Before gaining its independence, Armenia had called for horizontal links with the Republics of the former Soviet Union. It was now a full member of the Commonwealth of Independent States and sought to establish cooperative relations not only with its immediate neighbours but with all countries around the world irrespective of their political agendas. It was in that spirit, too, that it supported a

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(Mr. Krikorian, Armenia)

successful and speedy conclusion to the Uruguay Round and joined in the appeal by the Group of 77 and the Rio Group to the developed countries to work towards a reduction of their deficits. The United Nations must play a leading role in securing greater economic cooperation and development, as it was called upon to do by its Charter.

24. In conclusion, Armenia was pleased that it was now able to take part in the work of the Committee and would benefit from its deliberations.

25. Mr. MONTAÑO (Mexico) associated himself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 and the Rio Group and recalled that Mexico had always maintained that the Organization was called upon to play as important a role in development as in peace-keeping. It was somewhat surprising that most statements in the general debate in the General Assembly had dealt only with peace-keeping, even though poverty and underdevelopment were known to be the underlying causes of many conflicts.

26. There had been grounds for hope that the end of bipolarism would promote conditions enabling all peoples to fulfil their hope of living in peace and enjoying decent living standards. Instead, the global economic situation was deteriorating and the gap between North and South was widening. Those problems highlighted the importance of international cooperation. The United Nations was ideally placed to launch a concerted world-wide campaign with a view to meeting the challenges facing mankind in the economic, political, population and social spheres and to making optimum use of available human potential.

27. That task called not only for cooperation but also for an open and equitable multilateral trading system. With the proliferation of protectionist measures, the stalling of the Uruguay Round was a matter of concern. Its successful conclusion would have an extremely positive impact on the resumption of world growth and especially on investment and trade flows.

28. In order to tackle the critical situation of their economies and meet the challenges of globalization and interdependence, the developing countries had embarked on a liberalization process at the cost of huge sacrifices which had not been matched by similar action in the industrialized countries. Mexico, for its part, had opened its borders to exports from countries all over the world and had established closer links with the countries of the region under free trade agreements, in accordance with the principles of multilateralism and non-exclusion and on the basis of mutual and comparative advantages.

29. At its current session, the General Assembly was to establish the Commission on Sustainable Development, which would be responsible for following up the implementation of the agreements concluded at Rio de Janeiro on environment and development. To be effective, the Commission would have to be composed of high-level representatives, formulate innovative proposals and refrain from violating the sovereign rights of States. The richest countries,

(Mr. Montaño, Mexico)

which were those that polluted most, would have to commit themselves formally to financing the activities provided for under Agenda 21.

30. Operational activities were a major component of the Organization's international cooperation activities. Various proposals for enhancing their effectiveness had been put forward. Any reform should be governed by the principles of sovereign equality of States, equitable geographical distribution and democratic procedure in decision-making. The legitimate desire to improve the Organization's structures should not lead to the neglect of some of the Organization's spheres of activity. The objective must be to shape a world order that would be in the service of mankind, in other words, one of equity among peoples, peace and development.

31. Mr. AL-FARDAN (Bahrain) said that the decades of cold war had been characterized by the predominance of political over economic issues, whence the guarded and indeed worried reactions to the present state of the world economy. With the end of the cold war, the resources released by the reduction in military budgets should be one of the main sources of capital that would stimulate a resumption of growth, in a context of sustainable development. Developed and developing countries owed it to themselves to cooperate, within the framework of the United Nations system, in order to promote the independent development of the developing countries and rectify the shortcomings of the world economy as a whole. The need to alleviate the economic difficulties of the developing countries and of the least developed countries placed a substantial burden of responsibility on the industrialized countries, particularly since the latter had succeeded in controlling inflation while maintaining growth.

32. The recessionary tendencies of the 1980s persisted, causing the continued worsening of the situation in developing countries, particularly African countries which were still suffering from drought and famine and Latin American countries which were still weighed down by a heavy debt burden. The net decline in the growth rate of the global economy during the 1980s was probably attributable to deflationary monetary and financial policies, as well as to factors such as natural disasters, drought, desertification, imbalances in some countries' balance of payments, exchange rate fluctuations, the unprecedented rise in interest rates, the decline in commodity prices and the development of protectionist tendencies and discriminatory practices in some countries. Those internal and external factors explained the decline in the growth rate and in per capita income in most developing countries during the 1980s, the external environment having forced those countries to adopt structural adjustment policies which had resulted in a negative transfer of resources, a decline in investments and a reduction in development budgets, including the funds allocated to social services.

33. The growing marginalization of the developing countries because of their shrinking role in trade and financial relations had undoubtedly widened the gap between them and the developed countries, and had contributed

(Mr. Al-Fardan, Bahrain)

significantly to the deterioration in living conditions and in economic and social infrastructures. That gap between North and South was one reason for the instability experienced by some developing countries, which was bound to have repercussions on the countries of the North.

34. The United Nations played a vital role in international cooperation, and preserving that role had become even more crucial because recent radical changes on the international scene were moving in the direction of expanded international multilateral cooperation. The scientific, institutional and political obstacles to such cooperation had still to be removed. The Rio Conference had provided the opportunity for the international community to take the first steps towards achieving common aspirations for the twenty-first century. No one could deny the magnitude of the threats to the global environment. The ecological, health and economic repercussions were felt mainly by the developing countries, which had neither the financial resources nor the technical means to resolve those problems. The Rio Conference had been the culmination of lengthy negotiations in which many viewpoints had been reconciled, the magnitude of the threat having convinced all countries that those problems could be solved only through joint action.

35. In order to guarantee sustainable, adequate and ecologically sound development, projects based on the wise use of natural resources should be supported. Through environmental impact studies, care should be taken to ensure that projects that did the least damage to the environment were promoted.

36. Mr. Guerrero (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

37. Mr. MURIITHI (Kenya) said that prospects for growth in the 1990s looked gloomy. There had been little or no improvement in the per capita income gap between the industrialized world and the countries of the South. The incidence of poverty in the developing countries would remain high, with almost one billion people having per capita incomes of less than 300 dollars a year by the year 2000. While the quality of life might improve in certain parts of the world, the number of Africans living below the poverty line was projected to increase at an alarming rate. The critical economic and social conditions affecting the millions of people in Africa were alarming. Over the past decade, economic growth had stagnated in some African countries while others had experienced negative growth. The reasons for the decline were many; they included the debt burden, worsening terms of trade, declining commodity prices and shrinking direct foreign investment, the effects of structural adjustment and unemployment. The African countries had made serious development efforts, but had been frustrated by the shortage of official development assistance in the form of grants and concessional loans and the crippling debt burden, which now amounted to an annual repayment level of about 25 billion dollars.

(Mr. Muriithi, Kenya)

38. On average, the people of Africa lived in abject poverty. That situation was aggravated by the growing food emergency in many parts of the continent, where almost 40 million people were at risk of starvation. There were acute food shortages in East and southern Africa in particular, as a result of climatic aberrations and the influx of refugees, and the countries concerned deserved the attention of the international community. African countries could not afford to meet their international obligations and import food at the same time. They were making every effort to cooperate among themselves in order to achieve sustainable and self-reliant development based on endogenous growth. They firmly believed that South-South cooperation was complementary to North-South cooperation. The recently signed Treaty on the African Economic Community and other subregional and regional arrangements were targeted at achieving that fundamental objective. The international community must take the measures agreed to in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s in order to assist the African countries.

39. The United Nations had a central role to play in enhancing international cooperation for development. The restructuring and revitalization of the Organization in the economic, social and related fields was urgent, to strengthen those aspects and make them more responsive to the changing realities and development needs of the developing countries. The proposed reform of operational activities was an important step forward, but should be matched by the necessary financial resources.

40. Like other developing countries, Kenya was concerned at the failure of the international financial system to furnish adequate development capital, leaving the developing countries with serious financial problems. There had been a sharp contraction in external commercial flows and a virtual stagnation of official development assistance at less than half the agreed level of 0.7 per cent of GNP of the developed countries. That target must be reached as soon as possible in order to achieve the objectives for sustainable development under Agenda 21. The developed countries, having acknowledged their responsibility for ensuring sustainable development in view of the pressures their economies placed on the global environment, must fulfil that responsibility through the transfer of financial resources and appropriate technology. Kenya attached great importance to the decision to establish the Commission on Sustainable Development, which should operate as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council. Among the decisions taken at UNCED, Kenya welcomed the attention accorded to desertification, one of the serious problems facing the African continent, which had retarded development and given rise to untold poverty. The proposed international convention to combat desertification particularly in Africa, should contribute to the elimination of that scourge.

41. In discussing the agenda items allocated to it, the Second Committee must keep in mind that, in recent years, developing countries such as Kenya had undertaken far-reaching reforms and restructuring of their economies to give greater emphasis to the private sector in the development process. Those

(Mr. Muriithi, Kenya)

reforms had involved privatization of public companies. While their primary object had been the improvement of domestic economic performance, they would also benefit the industrialized countries by opening up markets for their goods and facilitating the repatriation of investment capital and dividends. The reforms were also targeted at creating attractive foreign investment opportunities, either directly or through joint ventures. However, the protectionist policies and practices being pursued by various developed countries were hindering the expansion of international trade, thereby denying developing countries the benefits of their reforms. It was necessary, therefore, for developed countries to take the necessary measures and inject the required political will to make possible the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round.

42. Through its operational activities for development, the United Nations had contributed to the mobilization of resources and technical assistance for deployment in developing countries, but such activities could only be enhanced further through the determined will and genuine support of the entire international community.

43. Mr. SARDENBERG (Brazil) observed that the Governments of all Member States were striving to raise the living standards of their populations and that each was acutely aware of the needs and demands of its people and of the available resources, and, through resource allocation and the establishment of policies, was seeking to satisfy those needs and demands as far as possible. The very multiplicity of the paths chosen by different States, with varying emphases on market forces, planning or social aspects, testified to the fact that such policies must, by definition, be strictly country-specific. It would serve no purpose, therefore, to attempt to determine a universally applicable national policy for development. The national efforts of developing countries could, however, be greatly enhanced through international cooperation, which was one of the principal functions of the United Nations as laid down in its Charter. That, therefore, was what the Second Committee should concentrate on. The cooperation encouraged by the Organization could take two forms: first, the use of the considerable expertise built up by the collection and analysis of data and the formulation of concepts and ideas, taking advantage of the pooling of Member States' resources in that area. Supplied on request, that expertise could contribute to the evaluation and design of alternative policy options by Member States. Secondly, the United Nations was a forum for the discussion of issues of a global economic nature. By virtue of its universality and its democratic decision-making processes it was in a unique position to deal with those issues beyond the scope of national policies, such as fostering trade by increasing market access, facilitating the transfer of technology, stimulating foreign direct investment, encouraging the flow of financial resources to the developing countries, and coordinating macroeconomic policies. All Member States stood to gain by creating an international economic environment conducive to development, as the removal of existing obstacles would benefit all countries. Greater market access for developing countries' exports would give

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

them the means of increasing their imports as well, thus stimulating their economies.

44. As the Secretary-General had pointed out, the Organization would require strengthening in several key aspects in order to promote the agenda for development. For instance, in his delegation's view it was necessary to strengthen the Secretariat's analytical capabilities so that positive contributions to development could be made in the form of reports and recommendations to Members and intergovernmental bodies.

45. In conclusion, his delegation wished to underline the current grim situation of the global economy. The developing countries had already lost one decade, the 1980s. The current decade, while it had shown some improvement, was far from providing the conditions for the necessary progress. Indeed, it was paradoxical that the developing countries had, to varying degrees, been responsible for what economic momentum there was. That had been achieved in large measure through structural adjustment programmes which, though they had laid the groundwork for growth, had done so at an enormous social cost. In contrast, stagnation in the industrialized world had severely dampened the prospects for renewed development while amplifying those programmes' negative social consequences.

46. Mr. Piriz-Ballon (Uruguay) resumed the Chair.

47. Mr. RAICHEV (Bulgaria) noted that during the past year there had been considerable progress toward strengthening multilateral cooperation. Recent events in many parts of the world had underscored the indissoluble links between economic development and political and social stability. It had become obvious that securing durable peace would not be possible without social stability and sound economic conditions. The international community was also becoming aware that development should be human-centred, equitable, and environmentally sustainable, and recognizing that new relations should be established founded on the promotion of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, a market economy, social justice and security.

48. At the same time, the past decade, despite some achievements in the economic and social fields, had left unsolved the problems of poverty, underdevelopment, famine, population growth, environmental degradation, epidemic diseases and accelerated migration. Another serious concern was the global slowdown of the world economy. The continuing imbalances in the international trade and financial systems, excessive debt burdens, inadequate resources for development, and the generally unfavourable economic environment were among the factors that were continuing to hamper the growth and development of many countries. The least developed countries, particularly those in Africa, were facing an especially difficult situation. The unprecedented transformations taking place in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe had proved to be much more complex and painful than previously expected. Output and income levels in those countries had fallen sharply and

(Mr. Raichev, Bulgaria)

were a major cause of the negative trends in the world economy. In the developed economies the recovery was still weak and fragile.

49. All of those considerations called for a concerted global response whereby the United Nations should maintain an integrated overview and address effectively the problems of development. There was a need for tangible decisions aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the Organization in the economic and social sectors; and the ongoing restructuring should contribute to that end.

50. In view of the accelerated integration and globalization of markets, the development of each country depended more than ever on securing a favourable international economic climate. The revival of world economic growth on a sustainable basis should therefore be one of the principal objectives of international cooperation for development in the 1990s; the coordination of macroeconomic policies to find solutions to the existing problems in the international monetary and trading systems was essential. The opening of markets through a balanced outcome of the Uruguay Round, an easing of debt burdens, and the mobilization by sufficient resources for development assistance were important elements of that process.

51. One of the greatest challenges for the current decade was the transition to democracy and a market economy in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Experience had shown, however, that such a transition was not possible without the support of the international community. It was essential, therefore, for the United Nations to play a more active role in supporting the reforms and in promoting cooperation with those countries.

52. The past decade had brought to the fore environmental sustainability as a key dimension of development. The Rio Conference had agreed on a global strategy for achieving environmentally sustainable development in the context of Agenda 21. It was now essential to build an effective institutional follow-up to ensure the practical implementation of the decisions taken. The negotiations to be conducted by the Second Committee on questions related to the Commission on Sustainable Development were particularly important in that regard.

53. Another important element in the efforts to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to deal with the problems of development was the improvement of the governance and financing of the operational activities of the United Nations system. Bulgaria supported the proposals aimed at making the system more responsive to the needs of Member States by concentrating on activities at the field level and providing a unified United Nations presence at the country level. At the same time, the system should strictly observe the basic principles of neutrality, impartiality and cultural sensitivity. There was also a need for closer cooperation between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions on the basis of comparative advantage.

(Mr. Raichev, Bulgaria)

54. Bulgaria strove to participate actively in international economic cooperation. Over the past two years, the process of change had yielded encouraging results. Despite social and political tensions, the reforms were being carried out in a peaceful manner. Considerable progress had been made towards the establishment of the legal foundations for the functioning of a market economy and the consolidation of democratic institutions. A number of practical steps had also been taken in the economic sphere; a special role was being assigned to anti-inflationary measures, stabilization of the balance of payments and the restructuring of industries. Those measures were being implemented in close collaboration with IMF, the World Bank and EBRD.

55. As a European country, Bulgaria attached particular importance to its participation in European economic cooperation and to its accession to the Council of Europe, the ongoing negotiations for its association with the European Community, and cooperation with EFTA. It also attached importance to the activities of the Economic Commission for Europe, which could provide support to countries in transition. Bulgaria was interested in developing economic cooperation with all its neighbours on a bilateral and multilateral basis. Subregional cooperation in the Black Sea area was a new and positive phenomenon which could contribute to the building of a new Europe and the establishment of an all-European economic area, as well as to the strengthening of security and confidence in the region.

56. Mr. CISSE (Senegal) said that at the economic and financial levels, the past two years had been marked by a series of international events which had drawn the attention of world leaders to the urgent need to ensure the economic growth and sustainable development of poor countries.

57. The international community had become aware of the need to strengthen international cooperation for sustainable development, a prerequisite for international peace and security. Among the measures that had resulted from that awareness, were the adoption of Agenda 21, the restructuring of the United Nations in the economic and social fields and the adoption of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa.

58. The Rio Conference had approved measures designed to reverse the effects of environmental degradation and promote sustainable and ecologically sound development in all countries. The decision to establish a commission on sustainable development to provide an institutional monitoring framework for the achievement of the objectives of Agenda 21 demonstrated the international community's commitment, at the highest level, to the economic and social progress of all countries. The hopes aroused by the establishment of that commission should lead the developed countries to translate the commitments made at the Conference into concrete terms and, in particular, to release the necessary resources.

59. In the context of the follow-up to the Conference, his delegation also noted with interest the UNDP initiative to support developing countries in drawing up and managing their sustainable development plans.

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(Mr. Cisse, Senegal)

60. Another essential point of particular interest to Africa was the preparation of an international convention to combat desertification. It was to be hoped that the negotiating committee to be established for the purpose would have the necessary logistical and financial resources to enable it to complete the drafting of the convention by June 1994, as envisaged in Agenda 21. Senegal hoped to participate actively in the negotiations on the adoption of a decision concerning the convening of an international conference on high seas fisheries in 1994.

61. With regard to the ongoing process of restructuring in the economic and social sectors, the high-level debate in the Economic and Social Council had led to a consensus on the role of the United Nations in the new world order and in achieving the key development objectives for the 1990s, which involved, in particular, strengthening international cooperation for sustained and lasting growth of the world economy, the development of the developing countries, macroeconomic management and the eradication of poverty. The negotiations on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations would have been more productive, however, if they had been based on General Assembly resolution 45/264, or if it had been recognized that the unique role of the United Nations in the promotion of international cooperation for development was based on the principles of universality, sovereign equality of States, non-intervention in their internal affairs and respect for the democratic decision-making process and equitable geographical representation.

62. With regard to the critical economic situation in Africa, the slow progress in implementing the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa had dashed the hopes aroused by its adoption. The financing needed for the implementation of that new programme was still not forthcoming. The Department of International Economic and Social Affairs should therefore make greater efforts to mobilize the required resources. In that respect, Senegal called for the establishment of an African fund for commodities diversification.

63. In that context, he wished to thank Japan for the interest it had shown in the economic situation in Africa and the welcome initiative it had taken in organizing a conference on African development to be held at Tokyo in 1993.

64. The question of financial resources was central to all the issues he had raised. For that reason, if the international community did not release the necessary resources in accordance with the commitments it had made to the economic growth and development of the developing countries, and if it did not show solidarity in the struggle against the deep-seated causes of poverty and economic stagnation and did not accept an inequitable share of adjustment, the implementation of the Agenda for peace was liable to be jeopardized.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/C.2/47/L.1/Add.1)

65. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco), referring to the document on the organization of work (A/C.2/47/L.1/Add.1) said that some documents scheduled to be issued on 5 October 1992 were still not available in distribution, in particular, the report of the Secretary-General on the international debt crisis and development (A/47/396). If the dates of issue of documents were not respected, it might be necessary to reconsider the dates for the consideration of the items they related to.

66. Mrs. KELLEY (Secretary of the Committee) said that she would immediately check the status of the document in question and would inform the representative of Morocco of the situation without delay.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.